



13th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting

1–4 June 2020 – Virtual meeting



Original: English

Country Statement

TUVALU

Tuvalu Fisheries Department



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Country Statement – Tuvalu

Summary of 2020 activities and achievements:

The COVID pandemic has meant that 2020 was a year without precedent. Although Tuvalu has been fortunate to be spared the worst effects – the country is still COVID-free, and our economy was not greatly affected – there have been many impacts on our way of life and our work. Fisheries was no exception, and many planned activities could not be completed. In particular technical assistance inputs were postponed; there was no travel to overseas meetings and training events; travel to the outer islands was affected by COVID concerns; there were delays in delivery of spare parts and equipment; addressing COVID risks in our interactions with foreign fleets was difficult and time-consuming; there was a freeze on recruitment; etc.

In spite of this, Tuvalu Fisheries Department can report a number of important achievements:

- Successful hosting of the last ‘real’ regional fisheries meeting – the observer coordinators’ workshop;
- All Tuvaluan Fisheries Observers were safely repatriated, with the great assistance of the fishing industry;
- Legal action over our Joint Venture vessel, detained in Majuro lagoon for 3 years following collapse of the JV partner, was concluded and the vessel sold;
- Our fisheries research vessel was slipped, repaired and returned to service (despite being delayed for many months in Fiji by border closures);
- Our access arrangements delivered near record annual revenue for Government;
- A system of buoys and beacons marking the Funafuti Conservation Area (the largest MPA in Tuvalu) was installed;
- Arrangements for continued support from two of our important development partners were agreed - with an extension of the World Bank PROP project, and a second phase of the New Zealand funded Tuvalu Fisheries Support Programme approved.

For a complete report of the work of the Fisheries Department in 2020 please refer to our Annual Report at www.tuvalufisheries.tv/library

Plans for 2021:

Our work plan for 2021 anticipated continued restrictions on international travel, with a reliance on virtual meetings and remote delivery of technical assistance. However we have an ambitious workplan. As well as our normal activities this includes:

- Full implementation of the longline Vessel Day Scheme;
- Expansion of the Tuvaluan purse seine fleet from one to six operational vessels;
- Deployment of Tuvaluan observers on purse seiners before the end of the year;
- Training of outer island communities in fishing vessel identification and reporting;
- Development of more specific coastal fisheries management plans for each of the outer islands;
- Introduction of size limits for key fish species in Funafuti;
- Expansion of the anchored FAD programme;
- Provision of sea safety grab bags to all remaining regular fishing boat operators;
- Delivery and commissioning of a new Fisheries Research and Support vessel from Japan (JICA aid);
- Training in seafood handling and processing in all islands;
- Construction of 50 one-man paddling canoes using modern materials to boost food security;
- Building a small Mariculture Hatchery and a Fisheries Training Centre on our fisheries site at Teone.

Our 2021 workplan can also be viewed at www.tuvalufisheries.tv/library

Support from SPC:

Tuvalu would like to gratefully acknowledge the continued support from SPC for a number of activities during 2020 and the first part of 2021. In addition to the technical advice and presentations provided to inform the many regional meetings and workshops, Tuvalu has benefited from:

- Extensive assistance with the design and ordering of materials for our planned mariculture hatchery;
- Advice and assistance with the specifications for new cages for milkfish culture;
- Advice on the designs and materials costs for paddling canoes;
- Advice on a training programme for outer island fisheries officers;
- Assistance on integrating data from our Coastal database into TAILS;
- Support for chairing the HOF12 meeting – the first ever virtual HOF meeting;
- Assistance with oceanic fisheries data and reporting to WCPFC;
- Providing a virtual workshop on Harvest strategies;
- Advice on trends in high seas purse seine fisheries;
- Development of a range information materials including posters in Tuvaluan on sea safety, seafood handling, and COVID quarantine precautions for transshipment.

As usual – a big thank you to SPC: **Fakafetai Lasi**