

PNA free school skipjack officially MSC certified!

What we had been hoping for has finally happened: our Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) free school, skipjack fishery has been certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)!

We received the official MSC announcement on 9 January 2012, but wanted to wait for this official statement before sharing it with you. In fact, the approval was already sent by the independent adjudicator, Melanie Carter, on 13 December 2011 after a number of objections by the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation and other tuna industry groups.

We want to thank you for all the support you have shown throughout this long process in 2011. Knowing that Pacifical could count on your constant interest gave us confidence throughout the development of the MSC certification to continue working for our purpose. We finally did it!

Within a couple of months, the distinctive blue MSC logo, along with our Pacifical co-brand, will accompany our skipjack tuna cans, indicating that this tuna comes from well-managed and sustainable fisheries.

From now on, MSC certified, FAD-free tuna caught in schools will be a sustainable alternative option to pole-and-line-caught tuna; supplying the world with mature skipjack and reducing bycatch to the maximum level demanded by our PNA nations, and doing away with bait-fish problems. Also, our skipjack are caught by purse seiners; it allows us to serve a much larger group of consumers with sustainable tuna.

With MSC certification, we can start delivering sustainable tuna as well as giving our people the right of getting

benefit from their own resources. “We live in this region, we live and breathe tuna and for many of our members, they have nothing else but tuna,” said Dr Transform Aqorau, director of PNA.

The journey has just begun and after certification there remains considerable work to be done. PNA and Pacifical are now in the process of starting to get fleets organized to fish, based on MSC procedures and chain of custody (CoC). We are also getting appointments with several of our exclusive partners to confirm details in regard to specifications.

It is worth mentioning that in the start-up period, the amount of MSC-certified tuna that Pacifical will have available, will be limited. So we will be able to serve only a select group of highly dedicated retailers, food service and food processing companies. With time, the amount of free school skipjack available will rise as more fishing companies and vessel owners participate in our CoC.

Right now, there are 265 tuna vessels operating in PNA waters. Some of them are already actively working with Pacifical and are enthusiastic about the idea of having separate wells for free school skipjack. We are expecting many more to join within this year.

Eventually we could be catching 500,000 metric tons of free school skipjack within PNA waters, which would fill 1.4 billion 185-g cans of tuna every year, enough to serve 4.2 billion meals, bringing extremely healthy,

The Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) controls the world's largest sustainable tuna purse-seine fishery

- PNA members include the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.
- Global leaders in tuna conservation and management, many PNA conservation measures are world firsts — such as high seas closures to fishing, controls on fish aggregating devices (FADs), protection for whale sharks and the 100% coverage of purse-seine fishing vessels with observers. No dolphins are caught in PNA waters and the PNA is actively involved in limiting bycatch of other species.
- In 2011, the PNA skipjack tuna caught without using FADs was certified by the Marine Stewardship Council as sustainable, creating the world's largest sustainable tuna purse-seine fishery.
- PNA controls around 30% of the global tuna supply.
- The focus of PNA efforts to sustainably manage tuna is the vessel day scheme. PNA members agree on a limited number of fishing days for the year, based on scientific advice about the status of tuna stocks. Fishing days are then allocated by country and sold to the highest bidder. In this way, Pacific Islanders reap economic benefits from their sustainable management of tuna.

Source: PNA website (<http://www.pnatuna.com/about-us>).

high-protein sustainably-produced food to every corner of the world, at an affordable price and with the least amount of environmental impact.

Unlike beef, chicken or farmed fish, tuna is a purely wild species that requires no farming, no antibiotics, no massive amounts of feeds and water, thereby causing no water or land pollution.

PNA, as guardians for our people and the world, all we need to do is to manage and catch skipjack in a sustainable way — and according to MSC principles — and this highly fecund and fast growing fish will be able to provide us healthy food for generations to come.

We look forward to having the first Pacific MSC-certified skipjack on the shelves in Europe at the start of summer this year!

Source: *PACIFICAL website, 12 January 2012*
(<http://www.pacifical.com/articles/00020.html>)



Solomon Islands purse seiner (Image: Malo Hosken).

PNA/MSC chain of custody — Innovating the tuna supply chain

We are getting closer and closer to the market introduction of Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)-certified skipjack tuna, caught and processed in the pristine waters of our Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) nations. I bet you are curious to know when you can expect to see the first products on your store shelves? Let us update you on that.

Before an MSC-certified fishery can bring its product to the market, all stages of its supply chain need to be organized and set up to ensure that MSC fish are kept completely separate until they reach the consumer, and the scheme is audited and certified against MSC standards. MSC calls this the chain of custody (COC).

Due to the massive surface area that the PNA skipjack fishery covers (40% bigger than Europe), and the fact that most purse seiners do not land their catch directly at the canneries (but are instead transshipped in PNA port to carrier vessels to the processor), this extension of the COC is a separate challenge. Setting up such a system has required major innovations in procedures on how tuna are handled onboard, transshipped, and landed and how this system is managed and monitored. The PNA has taken up that challenge.

For our PNA free school, skipjack fisheries, that means that we will show to an independent (i.e. third party) that our supply chain, or COC, meets all of the very stringent conditions of the MSC programme: from the moment that the purse seiner leaves port to go fishing, to the moment it has discharged the tuna at the cold store.

Effectively, this requires that we make all of the people involved in this operation — observers, captains, crews and company management — fully aware of what is expected from them in their daily work, and held responsible. Intensive training programmes and

extensive manuals, for each part of the supply chain, have been designed to ensure that everyone involved is well informed, educated and tested. Throughout February, March and April of 2012, the PNA and Pacifical have joined efforts to instruct the PNA fishing and processing companies that have chosen to follow MSC's rigorous COC standards and to fish MSC skipjack in PNA waters for Pacifical customers all over the world.

For the past few weeks, seven major fishing and processing companies have been internally audited, and on the list are still five more to go for the introductory phase. The strengths and weaknesses regarding MSC's COC standards for each of these audited companies have been identified, fishing and processing companies are currently making the necessary adjustments.

Now that the training sessions and internal audits are almost finished, trial trips are being prepared to assess (onboard) the performance of the catching procedure and separation of the skipjack in different wells. The first trial trip was made last year, and now the final trials will follow this coming month, which — with transshipping — will last an average of 45 days.

As always, we will keep you posted!

Source: *Adapted from a PACIFICAL article, May 2012*
(<http://www.pacifical.com/articles/00031.html>)