How do we observe and monitor artisanal tuna fisheries in the western and central Pacific?

The Pacific Community established a new artisanal monitoring programme in 2011 to document the number of small-scale vessels involved in the fishery and their total catch. The impact of the industrial tuna fisheries on these vessels is an important focus.

Challenges

- Access to remote sampling sites
- Basic infrastructure
- Difficult to uniquely identify canoes
- Landing sites can be very dispersed
- Neither discards or market data are collected
- Little or no legislation to support monitoring
- Issues of data confidentiality in small communities

Sampling design

- Standardised data collection forms
- Vessel registration to enumerate and identify vessels
- Data collection at main landing sites, no on-board observations
- Complements and enhances other programmes, including FAD deployments, and socio-economic and creel surveys
- Fisher lead data collection for charter vessels being considered

Currently across seven Pacific countries

Are large offshore vessels affecting artisanal vessels catch?

“Gifting” of discards can flood the local market and reduce artisanal fishing.

Analysis of catch data from Tuvalu and other countries shows artisanal catches may be affected by offshore vessels, depending on the extent of the overlap in their fishing location and species composition.

Conclusions

- Report on challenges of vessel registration is available
- Programme is linked to Goal 4 (food security) of Pacific Regional Roadmap for Fisheries
- Long-term data sets starting to emerge
- Future steps will increase the use of technology and more analysis

Poster by Deirdre Brogan