

OFF launches country webpages

Thanks to resources provided by the New Zealand Overseas Development Administration, and the Europe Aid Cooperation Office (AIDCO) through the European Union SciCOFish project, SPC's Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFF) has been able to perform a major overhaul and expansion of the "country pages" on its website (www.spc.int/OFPMemberCountries).

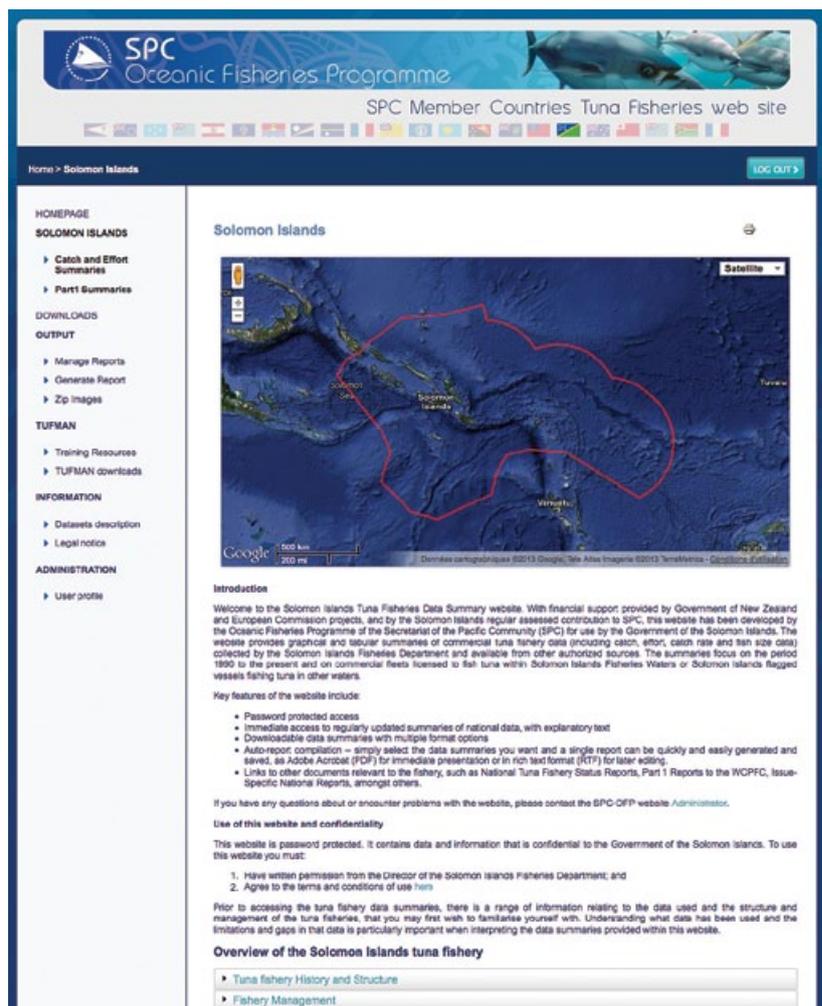
These webpages provide a series of exclusive economic zone-specific "windows" onto the catch and effort data that are held on behalf of each SPC member island country and territory in SPC's tuna fisheries databases.

As well as providing secure access to printer-ready graphs, plots, and interpretations for inclusion into national tuna fisheries reports — particularly Part 1 of the Annual Report that SPC island members have committed to share through the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission each year — the website also provides ready access to OFF national tuna fisheries reports and national database updates. The site can also host copies of national tuna fisheries management plans and other important national tuna fisheries documents if desired, providing instant access to authorised national staff wherever they are in the world.

Security and confidentiality is an important feature. Each SPC island member has a separate subsite and password-required logons are only provided by SPC to persons specifically authorised in writing by the relevant Head of Fisheries. And in accordance with SPC and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission data confidentiality rules, the summaries available to each SPC member are confined to fishing within their own waters, fishing by their vessels in the rest of the region, or which use data already in the public domain.

However, as data-sharing agreements evolve, such as through the Niue Treaty Multilateral Subsidiary Agreement, the data that go into the summaries available to each SPC island member on this website will need to be adjusted.

All of the national data summary pages have been on the secure site since 1 January 2013, and individual country pages can be accessed by authorised users logging on to <http://www.spc.int/OFPMemberCountries/>. If you don't already have it, then access to your country pages can be obtained by your national Head of Fisheries writing to spc@spc.int (attention: Director, FAME) and providing authorisation for you to be given a password. If you are not a government fisheries staff member, contact details for your national or territorial Head of Fisheries can be found in the SPC Fisheries Address Book at www.spc.int/coastfish/doc/coastfish_docs/Address_book.pdf



The Solomon Islands country homepage, leading to catch and other data specific to the Solomon Islands tuna fishery. This page can only be accessed by authorised users.

With time, and provided resources are available, the national data summaries and visualisations available on OFP's website will be expanded to address the ever-increasing reporting requirements that SPC members agree to at WCPFC meetings. Part 1 Annual Reports are only the tip of a reporting iceberg, which gains a new layer every time a new WCPFC conservation and management measure is agreed on.

This obligation rests particularly heavily on Pacific Island countries, which are developing their own commercial tuna fisheries, because most WCPFC reports require action by the country that flags the vessels that do the fishing, not the country where the fishing occurs. At the moment however, this website concentrates on "SPC" rather than "WCPFC" aspects of the data, and most of the information available is about catch and effort in national fisheries waters.

The OFP country webpages themselves are not "live", but neither are they static and changeless. Thanks to a code engine written in the statistical toolbox language "R", each of the graphs and summaries on the site is updated and refreshed regularly from the central database. Any interpretation and explanatory text has to be updated manually by OFP staff however, and the task of reviewing nearly 1000 pages (up to 60 per SPC island member) does not happen instantaneously.

In addition to the data summary pages already available for all countries, national tuna fishery overview pages are also being prepared, with overviews for Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, and Solomon Islands first off the mark. Explanatory text is also being added to individual data summaries — a major task that will be completed by the end of March 2013.

Sections are also being added that summarise the available data on non-tuna species caught by commercial tuna fisheries, and the oceanography in each exclusive economic zone. Issue-Specific National Reports are also being prepared for several countries on the potential for interaction between commercial tuna fisheries and artisanal fisheries.

Additional future developments that are planned — resources and personnel permitting — include the following:

- a regional overview site — one that applies to the entire regional dataset the same analyses that are currently applied to national datasets, so that countries can compare fishing in their own waters with the overall regional context. This will require additional work to ensure the integrity of data bound by any rules of confidentiality;
- programming additional data summaries that address new reporting obligations, particularly those under WCPFC conservation and management measures that are not captured by Part 1 reports; and
- adding interactivity to the more heavily-used summaries, allowing users to specify time-periods and sub-zones for summarisation (a kind of "online Catch and Effort Query System").¹

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¹ <http://www.spc.int/OceanFish/en/ofpsection/data-management/spc-members/dd/247-ces>



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