

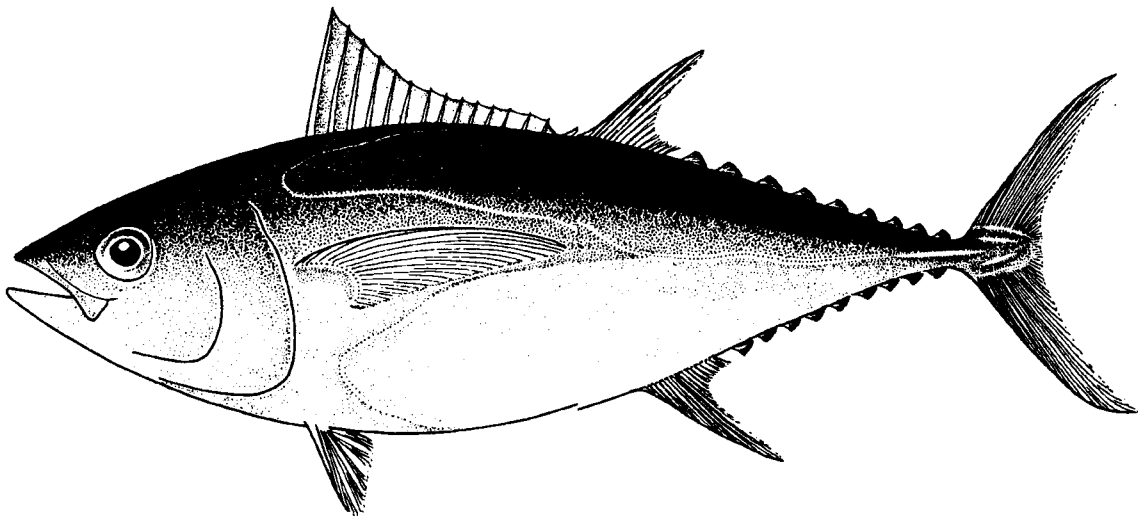


SCTB13 Working Paper

NFR-4

Cook Islands Country Report

Josh Mitchell



Ministry of Marine Resources
Cook Islands

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5 July – 12 July 2000,
Noumea, New Caledonia.**

Country Report:

COOK ISLANDS

BACKGROUND

FLEET STRUCTURE

There were four foreign longliner vessels licensed in the 1998/99 financial year. These vessels fished in the Cook Islands EEZ on a year round basis, targeting albacore tuna for the cannery in American Samoa. In addition to the foreign fleet, there were two smaller local longliner vessels based out of Rarotonga, and servicing the local market.

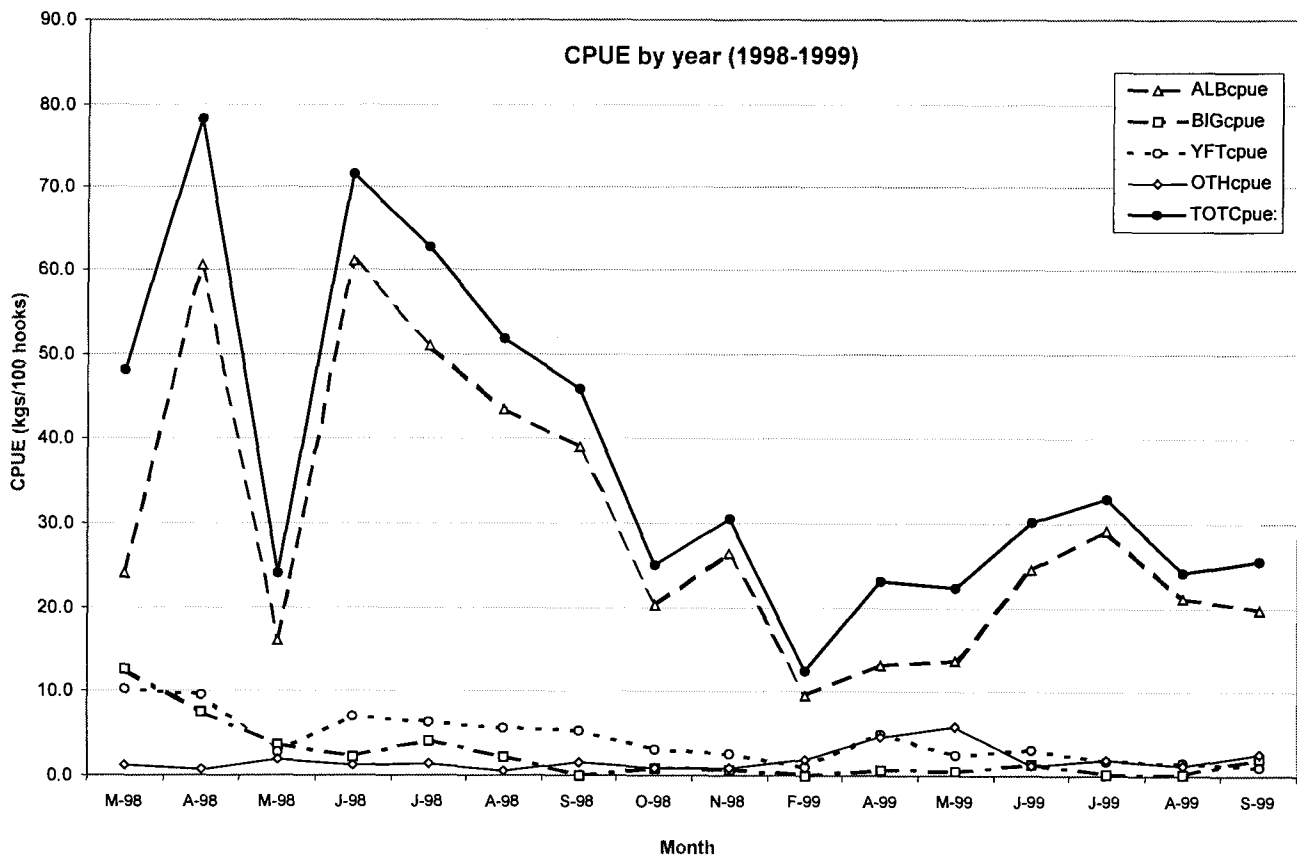
TOTAL CATCH BY SPECIES 1998-1999

The total catch taken between 1998 up to the end of 1999 is estimated to be approximately 980 metric tonnes. This figure was calculated using the daily catch reports, which had close to 100% coverage.

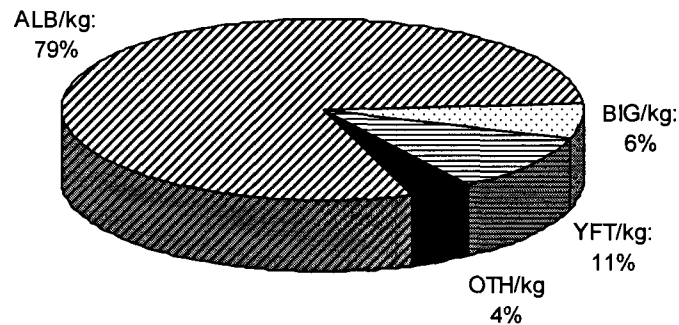
Table 1. Catch Statistics for Foreign Fishing Vessels in the CKEEZ from 1998 - 1999.

Year	Albacore	Bigeye	Yellowfin	Marlin	Other	Total	Hooks	CPUE
1998	541260	54755	79730	12400	300	688445	1238400	55.6
1999	239780	5250	24300	23620	2240	295190	1104000	26.7

*catch is represented in kgs.



Species Composition 1998-1999



Future Prospects & Development

With respect to the onshore developments, there has been substantial investment into coolstore and freezer facilities which has ensured a more consistent supply of fish to the local market. The construction of a local fish market building (and an ice making plant) recently has also provided the local fishermen with a centralised location in which to sell their catch. There are currently around eighty small scale '*poti maroro*' fishing vessels which are utilising these newly constructed facilities on the island of Rarotonga.

The Ministry of Marine Resources (MMR) has undertaken an ambitious programme to deploy fish aggregating devices (FADs) in all inhabited islands of the Cooks. This programme is aimed at improving the catch in these islands, and enabling easier access by smaller fishing craft to tuna stocks in waters closer to shore.

MMR is also currently reviewing its legislation with assistance from the FFA, to make it more in line with the provisions under UNCLOS and more specifically the fish stocks agreement (UNIA). This work is due to be completed in August/September in preparation for the signing of the MHLC convention.