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**FIFTH SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE RESEARCH WORKSHOP  
CINQUIEME REUNION DU GROUPE DE TRAVAIL SUR LES RECHERCHES  
CONSACREES AU GERMON DU SUD**

(Papeete, French Polynesia, 29 March – 1 April 1993)  
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**COUNTRY STATEMENT – SOLOMON ISLANDS**

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**FIFTH SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE RESEARCH MEETING**

29TH MARCH TO 2ND APRIL 1993

PAPEETE, FRENCH POLYNESIA

COUNTRY STATEMENT: SOLOMON ISLANDS

## **Introduction**

Solomon Islands consists of a chain of islands extending between 5 and 13 degrees South and 155 and 158 degrees east in the Southwest Pacific and covers about 1,400 kilometers of ocean. The declaration of a 200-miles Exclusive Economic Zone in 1978 saw Solomon Islands laying claim over marine resources within a sea area of approximately 1.3 million square kilometers.

Foreign longline fishing was very common in the Solomon Islands waters prior to 1978. Some of the longliners have targeted albacore for overseas canneries. The others, who have been targeting on other deep swimming tunas have also taken albacore as incidental catch.

## **Albacore Resource**

Although albacore is predominantly a temperate water species, contrary to tropical environment of the Solomon Islands, they can be found at great depth in our waters. The quantity of albacore that has already been taken from our waters by foreign longline fishing vessels has indicated that there is a considerable quantity of albacore available in our waters.

## **Albacore Research**

As there has not been any research work done on albacore in the Solomon Islands waters, very little is currently known about the status of the albacore resource.

## **Foreign Fishing Vessels' Operations**

Prior to Solomon Islands declaration of the EEZ in 1978, Japanese and Taiwanese longliners were very active in our waters. Japanese longliners targeting on yellowfin and bigeye, since 1962, have taken fair quantities of albacore as incidental catch. In 1967 Taiwanese longliners, targeting on albacore, joined the Japanese longline fleet to fish in our waters. This has resulted in the increased albacore catch between 1967 and 1977 as compared to previous years when Japan was operating alone.

Taiwanese longliners ceased operation at the beginning of 1978 when Solomon Islands declared a 200-mile EEZ. Only Japan has maintained its interest and continued to fish under an access arrangement in 1978. Solomon Islands in its effort to maximise revenue from the available deep swimming tuna resources, negotiated for and pursued access arrangements with Taiwan and Korea in the early 80's. Taiwan and Korea operated 96 and 226 longliners during 1980 and 1981 respectively. Since 1982, however, only Japanese longliners have had access to the

Solomon Islands waters under access arrangement.

Taiwan renegotiated a renewal of its access arrangement and started fishing in our waters again in 1990. Currently both the Japanese and the Taiwanese longliners have fishing access to the Solomon Islands waters.

Most longline fishing operations were been carried out around the Eastern Outer Islands and the period of which most such operations normally take place is from August to January.

In 1992, for instance, only two entries were made by foreign fishing longliners in the Solomon Islands waters between the period from January to July. Most of the entries for 1992 occurred during the second half of the year.

### **Albacore Catches**

Historical foreign longline catches are presented in table 1 & 2. Considerable quantities of albacore were taken from our waters by foreign longliners with catches exceeding 2,000 mt been obtained in 1962, 1971, 1977, and 1980. Since then the albacore catches have began to decline.

A total allowable catch of 8,500 mt is current in force for the longline fishery. In the allocation of this quota no reference has been made to species.

**Table 1: Historical Catches by Foreign Longline Fishing Vessels  
in the Solomon Islands Waters**

Year	Albacore	Yellowfin	Bigeye
	(mt)	(mt)	(mt)
1962	2,284	4,258	651
1963	431	2,116	310
1964	470	1,906	214
1965	180	927	177
1966	671	2,985	347
1967	1,553	1,551	409
1968	1,064	758	201
1969	475	694	103
1970	1,950	873	315
1971	2,674	3,522	679
1972	564	949	251
1973	711	2,342	243
1974	177	419	109
1975	44	481	179
1976	181	657	354
1977	2,287	2,311	736

Table 2. Tuna catches by all Tuna Longliners in Solomon Islands Waters

Year	Albacore	Yellowfin	Bigeeye	Total	No. of Vessels	Fishing days
	(mt)	(mt)	(mt)	(mt)		
1978	1,944	1,551	436	3,931	94	182
1979	1,201	3,451	1,402	6,054	84	2064
1980	2,137	5,483	1,278	8,898	167 (J=87, T=96)	2033
1981	611	3,072	629	4,312	324 (J=98, K=226)	4736
1982	768	1,906	380	3,054	98	2930
1983	295	1,844	287	2,426	46	1566
1984	173	798	271	1,242	46	708
1985	278	3,152	923	4,353	60	2347
1986	288	1,897	578	2,763	44	1936
1987	9	767	179	955	27	551
1988	168	6,114	1,360	7,642	46	3749
1989	87	3,517	1,011	4,615	50	2862
1990	57	2,992	649	3,698	71 (J=51, T=20)	1467
1991	55	2,655	1,389	4,099	61 (J=36, T=25)	2404
1992	172	1,328	517	2,017	68 (J=54, T=14)	1027
1993					27 (J=13, T=14)	

Note: J = Japan  
T = Taiwan  
K = Korea