

2005 PHILIPPINE REPORT TO CCSBT

This report will contain the number of vessels that have caught southern bluefin tuna and the volume of catch as well as those exported to Japan in 2005.

As reported last year, large purse seiners from the Philippines have fished in adjacent neighboring countries under access, joint venture agreements or as local companies, with most of their catch being landed in Philippine ports for processing. Catches are also taken in high seas by purse seiners and longlines. With the passage of the 1998 Philippine Fisheries Code providing incentives for Philippine fishing vessel operators to fish further in the Philippine EEZ and beyond have encouraged them to venture in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to catch tunas like yellowfin, bigeye with incidental catch of southern bluefin tuna.

At present while the Philippines reported about 25 Philippine flagged fishing vessels authorized to fish southern blue fin tuna however from January to June 2005 only 3 fishing vessels among others caught SBT. About 24.5 tons were exported to Japan.

In the implementation of relevant CCSBT conservation and management measures, Philippine flagged fishing vessels are required under the Fisheries Code that before they can fish outside Philippine waters they should first secure an International Fishing Permit from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in addition to their Commercial Fishing Vessel and Gear License (CFVGL). They are also required to keep a daily record of fish catch and spoilage, landing points, quantity and value of fish caught. To have a uniform reporting system for the Philippine flagged fishing vessels, the Philippine Tuna Industry Council have approved for implementation a log sheet system which improve tuna catch statistics in the country in consonance with the requirement of Regional Fisheries Management Commissions. Moreover, the BFAR since October 2004 have implemented a moratorium in the licensing of new fishing vessels except when they operate outside Philippine waters. However, before a fishing company can import a fishing vessel for licensing in the Philippines it is required that an equivalent GRT must be scrapped from its fleet.

In a recent meeting of the Tuna Council, it also approved the Philippine Tuna Management Plan for the sustainable management of the tuna resources. Also, an agreement has been entered into between a Philippine company and BFAR for the provision of a Monitoring, Control and surveillance system for the Philippines.