

Taiwan Self-Assessment of Fishing Capacity

Recent History of the Taiwan SBT Fleet

In early 1980s, Southern Bluefin Tuna was a bycatch species of Taiwanese tuna longline fleet targeting albacore in the past and the annual catches of SBT were less than 250 tons. Since 1990s, some vessels equipped with deep-frozen freezers have started to target SBT seasonally. No Taiwanese tuna longline vessels fish for SBT year-round and the vessels targeting SBT seasonally mainly operate in the southern Indian Ocean from April to September, or from November to next February in the south-western Indian Ocean. SBT is as a bycatch of albacore target vessels in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Taiwan's SBT fishery comprises only the commercial tuna longline fleet.

Table 1 The number of active vessels fishing for southern bluefin tuna during 2002-2013

Year	Calendar year		Fishing year	
	Active vessel numbers		Active vessel numbers	
	Target	Bycatch	Target	Bycatch
2002	21	50	21	50
2003	76	24	76	24
2004	79	18	79	18
2005	49	8	49	8
2006	33	3	33	3
2007*	27	3	27	3
2008	35	6	35	6
2009	34	33	34	33
2010	65	17	65	17

2011	28	28	25	28
2012	12	24	12	24
2013	39	37	37	37

*Since 2007, Taiwan changes its fishing year (1 April – 31 March) from calendar year(1 January -31 December)

Capacity with Respect to Taiwan’s Allocation

Taiwan’s southern bluefin tuna (SBT) fishery has been managed through output controls under the individual quotas (IQ) system since 2002. The total allowable catch (TAC) of SBT is set based on Taiwan’s country allocation under CCSBT. The allocation is issued yearly. The number of vessel entitled to catch SBT is restricted to its national allocation. For the purpose of managing and controlling its quota, fishing vessels have been separated as seasonal target vessel and by-catch vessel.

Each vessel whether seasonal target or by-catch vessel, shall be permitted by the government in advance of fishing season every year. Individual quota has been allocated to each of seasonal target vessels, and partial quota has been reserved for by-catch vessels. By-catch vessels are allowed to have a maximum of 1.15 ton SBT by-catch per vessel.

The dynamic quota balancing mechanism has been established since 2004. Taiwan allocates its quota to each vessel permitted, which ensures the catch not exceeding the allocated annual quota. Any authorized vessel which does not move to SBT fishing ground or cannot use up its SBT allocation shall return its unfished quotas to Fisheries Agency of Taiwan (FA) by the end of August. FA then re-allocates these unfished quotas to seasonal target vessels which still operate in the fishing ground and need more quota of SBT, but such unfished quota of the year is not re-allocated to by-catch vessels.

Taiwan believes that its current management system for the SBT fishery offers a robust means of ensuring that it stays within the bounds of its national allocation without the need for additional measures aimed at restricting vessel capacity.