

# 20-FISHERIES

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The story of open sea fishing in New Caledonia began in the 1960s, when Japanese, Taiwanese and Korean long liners fished off the coast of New Caledonia. Subject to fisheries agreements from 1978 onwards (establishment of the EEZ), these operations slowed significantly in the latter half of the 1990s and ceased permanently from 2001. The local **long liner** fleet began developing from the 1980s, but it was not until after 2000 that a significant increase was seen, with fisheries capacity doubling in the space of 5 years. The open sea fishing industry, which generates approximately 230 direct jobs and turnover in the vicinity of 7.5 million Euros, of which 40% exports, remains extremely fragile, given its dependence on natural variations and the international economic situation. Open sea fishing nonetheless offers significant development potential, with its high value product that generates much employment both on land and at sea. The major problem confronting the industry is an under-utilised fleet, with less than two-thirds of vessels regularly landing fish.

Since 2003, an observatory responsible for socio-economic surveillance of New Caledonia's open sea fishing industry has operated within the **Merchant navy and maritime fisheries department**, itself responsible for implementation of fisheries policy as defined by the government of New Caledonia.

Species targeted by this fishery are :

- Albacore tuna (*thunnus alalunga*), sold on the local market or shipped in freezer cargo to the canneries in Samoa.
- Yellow fin tuna (*thunnus albacares*), partly sold on the local market, or for the premium sushi quality catch, shipped fresh to the Japanese market, and sometimes frozen.
- Bigeye tuna or bachi tuna (*thunnus obesus*) : sold partly on the local market, it is the rarest of species, the best seller in Japan, air freight exported as fresh product.
- Other species : marlin, swordfish, mako...

► **Long liners.** The long line comprises a master line several kilometres long, to which are attached lines (called "avaçons") booked and baited with sardine, herring or octopus. In New Caledonia, a tuna long line carries between 1 600 and 2 000 hooks, being about 30 hooks set between 60 buoys. It takes a tuna boat 3 to 4 hours to deploy the long line, which is left to drift for approximately four hours, then hauled in.

► **Department of maritime affairs, merchant navy, and fisheries.** Combined State (Maritime affairs) and New Caledonian (SMMPM : Merchant navy and maritime fisheries department) authority, answering to both the High Commissioner for the Republic (Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Tourism and the Sea, and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) and the government of New Caledonia. Given the powers allocated under the organic law, authority in terms of marine resources and fisheries is exercised at several levels.

- The State exercises authority resulting from international conventions, and is responsible for the safety of vessels and seamen (article 21 of the organic law).
- New Caledonia is responsible for legislation and exercise of exploration rights, exploitation management and preservation of biological and non-biological natural resources in the EEZ (article 22). In this role it awards fishing licences (See 20.1).
- The Provinces are responsible for legislation and exercise of exploration rights, exploitation management and preservation of biological and non-biological natural resources in inner waters, including those in bays and harbours, their ground and underground ; the underground and overlying waters of the territorial sea (articles 45 and 46). As part of their powers in terms of economic development, the provinces award commercial fishing permits (see 20.1).

## SOURCES

[1] Service de la Marine Marchande et des Pêches Maritimes (SMMPM), données statistiques sur la pêche.

[2] Service de la Marine Marchande et des Pêches Maritimes (SMMPM), *La commercialisation des poissons hauturiers dans le grand Nouméa*, octobre 2004.

[3] Direction Régionale des Douanes de Nouvelle-Calédonie (DRDNC), statistiques relatives aux exportations.

Service de la Marine Marchande et des Pêches Maritimes (SMMPM), *Le secteur de la pêche hauturière en Nouvelle-Calédonie*, octobre 2002.

Service de la Marine Marchande et des Pêches Maritimes (SMMPM), *La filière hauturière en 2004*.

Service de la Marine Marchande et des Pêches Maritimes (SMMPM), *Le secteur de la pêche hauturière en Nouvelle-Calédonie, situation actuelle et perspectives*, année 2001.

## SEE ALSO

ZONECO : [www.zoneco.nc](http://www.zoneco.nc)

Service des Affaires Maritimes, de la Marine Marchande et des Pêches Maritimes : [www.affmar.gouv.nc](http://www.affmar.gouv.nc)

École des Métiers de la Mer : [www.emm.nc](http://www.emm.nc)

Secrétariat général de la Communauté du Pacifique (CPS), division des ressources marines : [www.spc.int](http://www.spc.int)

# 20.2 OPEN SEA FISHING

## Long liner activity [1]

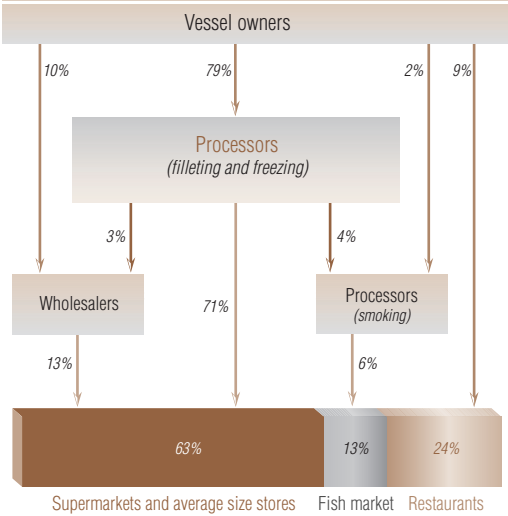
	2003	2004	2005
Licences issued	29	29	27
Licensed vessels not used	2	2	4
Vessels having landed fish during 3 months or less	4	2	2
Vessels having landed fish between 4 and 8 months	1	6	4
Vessels having landed fish during 9 months or more	22	19	17

Unit : number

## Long liner deployment [1]

	2003	2004	2005
Number of tides ended	506	507	407
Number of days at sea	5 224	5 096	4 108
Days at sea/total days (%)	51	52	49
Number of days fishing	3 386	3 399	2 836
Days fishing/ total days (%)	33	34	34
Thousands of hooks used	6 236	6 029	4 959

## Marketing of open sea fish in Greater Nouméa [2]

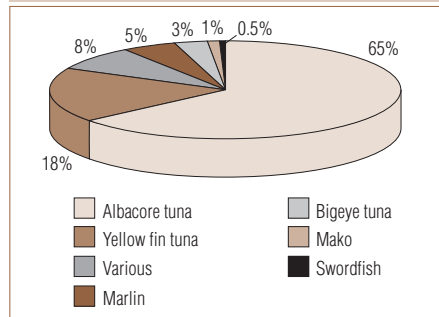


## Average production by operating vessel [1]

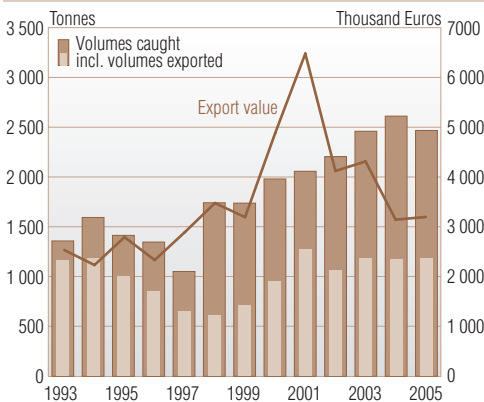
	2003	2004	2005
Albacore tuna	40	54	69
Yellow fin tuna	27	23	19
Bigeye tuna	5	3	3
Marlin	4	4	5
Swordfish	1	1	1
Mako	1	1	1
Various	10	9	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>108</b>

Unit : tonne

## Species fished in 2005 [1]



## Catch and exports from open sea vessels [1 and 3]



## Monthly catches by species in 2005 [1]

