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New Zealand Albacore Tuna Troll Fishery

3rd Surveillance Report

March 2020

Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)	Lloyd's Register
Assessment team	Jo Akroyd, Kevin McLoughlin
Fishery client	Tuna Management Association of New Zealand
Assessment Type	Third Surveillance

Assessment Data Sheet

Fishery name	New Zealand Albacore Tuna Troll Fishery	
Species and Stock	Albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*)	
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Glossary

CCM	WCPFC Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories are termed CCMs
CoC	Chain of Custody
CPUE	Catch per Unit Effort
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected
F	Fishing mortality
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
F_{MSY}	Fishing mortality at MSY
FNZ	(MPI) Fisheries New Zealand
HCR	Harvest Control Rule
ISSF	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
IWG	Inter-sessional Working Group
LRP	Limit Reference Point
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NZATTF	New Zealand Albacore Troll Tuna Fishery
PNA	Party to the Nauru Agreement
PRI	Point of Recruitment Impairment
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisations
SB	Spawning Biomass
SC	Science Committee (of the WCPFC)
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPC	Pacific Community (formerly referred to as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)
SPC-OFP	SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TCC	Technical and Compliance Committee (of the WCPFC)
TMA	Tuna Management Association
TRP	Target Reference Point
UoA	Unit of Assessment
UoC	Unit of Certification
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WCPFC-SC	WCPFC Scientific Committee
WCPO	Western Central Pacific Ocean

1 Executive Summary

The New Zealand Albacore Troll Tuna Fishery (NZATTF) was first MSC assessed and certified in 2011.

The certificate is held by the Tuna Management Association (TMA) of New Zealand. There is one Unit of Certification which is the same as the Unit of Assessment. The species is albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) and the stock is south Pacific albacore. The certified fish are caught only in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone.

At the 2nd assessment and re-certification of the fishery (February 2017), two Principle 1 conditions of certification were raised by the assessment team. A further Principle 3 condition was added at the 1st surveillance audit in 2018. This was in harmony with other south Pacific albacore certified fisheries and was raised due to WCPFC's lack of responsiveness to declining albacore catch rates (particularly for the longline sector). At the 2nd offsite audit (in 2019) TMA and New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) were found to have been active in progressing the requirements of the three conditions and all were assessed as on target.

There has been progress on the south Pacific albacore harvest strategy and the client has met the requirements of the Client Action Plan for Year 3. The two Principle 1 conditions are found to be **on target**. However, WCPFC16 has indicated that the CMM 2014-06 harvest strategy workplan is itself a work in progress: "*The workplan was always intended to be a living document and has been updated annually to reflect actual progress as well as other needs and developments*." (WCPFC16 2019, Attachment H). The workplan has undergone several revisions since its first iteration and was further revised at WCPFC16. The 2019 revised timeline of the workplan will not result in the requirements of the Principle 1 conditions being met by the 2021 hard deadline of the 2019 CAB Variation (see *Sections 4.2 and 4.3*).

The P3 condition was re-scored and closed at this audit. This condition revision is in harmony with other south Pacific albacore fisheries as the Commission has responded to declines in catches in the south Pacific albacore fishery.

The audit team confirms that this fishery continues to conform to the MSC Principles and Criteria for sustainable fishing. The audit team recommends that this fishery should remain certified and that product remains eligible to enter further chains of custody.

2 Report Details

2.1 Surveillance information

Table 1. Surveillance Information

1	Fishery name	
	New Zealand albacore tuna troll	
2	Surveillance level and type	
	Surveillance level 3, Off-site surveillance audit	
3	Surveillance number	
	3rd Surveillance	X
4	Proposed team leader	
	Jo Akroyd – Team Leader & Principle 3 Expert Jo is a Fisheries Management and Marine Ecosystem consultant with extensive international and Pacific experience. She has worked at senior levels in both the public and private sectors as a fisheries manager and marine policy expert. Jo was with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in New Zealand for 20 years. Starting as a fisheries scientist, she was promoted to senior chief fisheries scientist, then Assistant Director, Marine Research. She was awarded a Commemoration Medal in 1990 in recognition of her pioneering work in establishing New Zealand's fisheries quota management system. As well as carrying out general fisheries consultancy since1994 she has undertaken all facets of MSC work as a lead assessor, expert team member and peer reviewer across a wide range of fisheries. Jo has completed the MSC v1.3, v2.0 and v2.1 training modules including for enhanced fisheries, Risk based framework and traceability. She is a member of the MSC's Peer Review College, MSC projects include Team Leader and Fisheries Management expert for New Zealand fisheries, (hoki, hake, ling, southern blue whiting, albacore and skipjack), Fiji (albacore and yellowfin), Japan (scallops, skipjack and yellowfin), China (scallops, flounder and snowcrab), Maldives (skipjack), Ross Sea (toothfish), West Papua (skipjack and yellowfin). She has conducted multi-species pre assessments in Japan, China, Vietnam and New Zealand and provided independent peer review reports for tuna, scallops and prawn fisheries in various countries. Jo has passed MSC training and has no Conflict of Interest in relation to this fishery. Full CV available upon request.	
5	Proposed team members *[remove if not applicable]*	
	Kevin McLoughlin – Principle 1 & Principle 2 Expert Kevin McLoughlin is a specialist fisheries consultant based in Australia with more than 30 years' experience across a wide range of international and domestic fisheries science issues, with close links to government policy. He represented the Australian Government on many committees and groups such as fishery assessment groups, providing advice on a diverse range of fisheries and species (including tuna, shark, various finfish, scallop and prawn). Work in assessment groups involved assessment of target species, development of bycatch action plans and ecological risk assessments. Mr McLoughlin was responsible for the production of annual status reports for Australian government-managed fisheries for a number of years. Mr. McLoughlin was Australia's delegate on scientific issues at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and was Chair of the IOTC Working Party on Bycatch for several years. Mr McLoughlin was also a delegate at meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna.	

	Mr McLoughlin has worked predominantly on Principle 1 aspects of MSC assessments but has also undertaken Principle 2 and 3 work, as well as peer review and surveillance audits for several fisheries. Kevin was a team member for the full assessment of the Fiji albacore longline fishery, the New Zealand Albacore Fishery, the New Zealand Skipjack Fishery, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Western and Central Pacific Skipjack and Yellowfin unassociated purse seine fishery, the Tri Marine Western and Central Pacific Skipjack and Yellowfin Tuna Fishery, and Australia's blue grenadier fishery. He was also a member of teams assessing Australia's Northern Prawn Fishery, Western Australia's Exmouth Gulf and Shark Bay prawn trawl fisheries, and South Australia's Spencer Gulf prawn trawl fishery. He was a peer reviewer for the New Zealand albacore troll fishery and for the North and South Pacific American Albacore Fishing Association fisheries and has undertaken surveillance audits for a number of fisheries. Kevin has passed MSC training and has no Conflict of Interest in relation to this fishery. Full CV available upon request.
6	Audit/review time and location
	Remote calls took place in the week commencing 2nd March 2020, from the auditors' respective offices.
7	Assessment and review activities
	All relevant data, progress on the Client Action Plan and progress on the 3 open conditions.

2.2 Background

There have been no important changes to the management of the fishery since re-certification. In addition to the Public Certification Report (PCR) (Akroyd and McLoughlin, 2017), the client checklist and update report provides an overview of the fishery and recent developments (TMA 2020). The Tuna Management Association of New Zealand (TMA) does not maintain a vessel register. The number of vessels participating in the albacore troll fishery is variable from year-to-year as the albacore season is short (December – March) and vessels are also active in other fisheries. All vessels issued with a fishing permit by the Ministry for Primary Industries to catch albacore using troll gear are covered by the TMA's MSC certificate.

2.2.1 Changes in management system and/or relevant regulations

All albacore troll vessels are now required to report fishing activities and catches in real-time via New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Electronic Management System. Albacore remains as a non-quota species in New Zealand, but the troll fishery is otherwise subject to the same rules and regulations that apply to quota species.

2.2.2 Changes to personnel involved in science, management or industry

No changes.

2.2.3 Changes to scientific base of information, including stock assessments

2.2.4 Principle 1 – Target Stocks

The most recent stock assessment for south Pacific albacore was undertaken in 2018 (see summary below). New Zealand continues to provide catch and size frequency information from the albacore troll fishery to SPC on an annual basis for use in stock assessments.

Albacore catch monitoring:

Catch estimates for all tuna and billfish species fished in the WCPFC statistical area are compiled annually by SPC based on reports provided by CCMs. The most recent report provides catches for the period 1960-2018 (WCPFC-SC 2019b).

The south Pacific albacore catch in 2018 (68,454 t), was a significant decline on the record catch in 2017 (93,290 t) (Figure 1). The decline is primarily due to lower catches in the longline fishery (from 90,627 t in 2017 to 65,410 t in 2018) (WCPFC-SC 2019b). It is suggested that this decline may be related in part to the absence of any catch reported by the China longline fleet in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, south of the equator (WCPFC-SC 2019b). The WCPFC reported south Pacific albacore troll catch in 2018 of 2731 t was the highest for five years, with the New Zealand fleet taking 83% of the total (2272 t) within the New Zealand EEZ (Figure 2). The USA troll fleet of 16 vessels caught the balance on the high seas to the east of New Zealand along the Sub-Tropical Convergence Zone

(WCPFC-SC 2019b). Other flag states reporting troll catches of south Pacific albacore in recent years include Canada and the Cook Islands. A total of 132 vessels reported albacore troll catch in the New Zealand EEZ during the 2017/18 fishing year (October 1 to September 30). In 2018/19 the total number of vessels was 130 (TMA 2020).

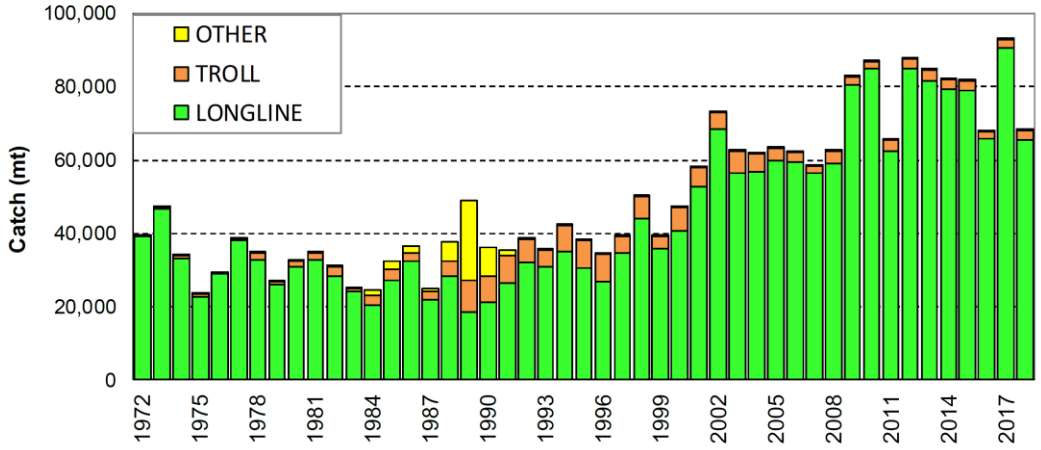

Figure 1. South Pacific albacore catch by gear, 1972–2018 (source WCPFC-SC 2019b)

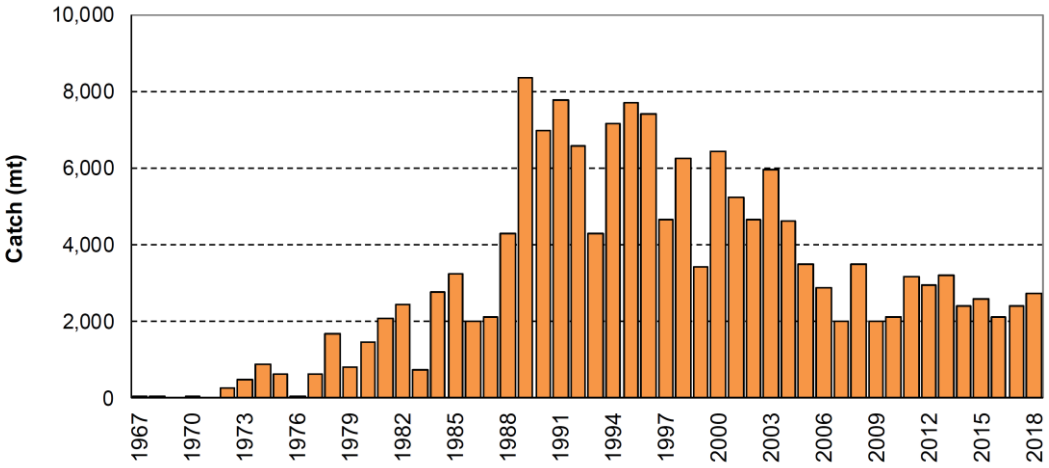

Figure 2. Albacore troll catch in the south Pacific Ocean, 1964-2017 (source WCPFC-SC 2019b)

New Zealand's troll fleet typically accounts for around 90% of the total albacore catch in the EEZ, the balance being taken by longliners. During the 2017/18 season, 132 troll vessels caught approximately 2445 t, a 25% increase over the 2016/17 catch of 1956 t. In the 2018/19 season, 130 troll vessels caught approximately 2328 t. New Zealand falls at the southern extreme of the albacore distribution range, which is defined by ocean temperature, and when sea temperatures off New Zealand are low, albacore are less abundant. Warmer conditions prevailed in 2018 and continued into 2019. The average size of albacore caught during 2019 was 5.2 kg, equivalent to the long-term average fish weight for the period 1999-00 to 2017-18 (TMA 2020).

A program of annual, shore-based albacore troll catch sampling is ongoing in order to provide length frequency information to SPC for use in southern albacore stock assessments. New Zealand's information is important in that it is the main source of data on juvenile size composition in the south Pacific. Catch sampling is conducted during the albacore troll season each year in the ports of Auckland and Greymouth, from December to April. Shed sampling aims to sample 5000 fish per season.

- In 2016/17, 3579 albacore were measured, amounting to approximately 1.3% of the total number of albacore landed. Shed sampling covered 191 fishing days, amounting to 5.2% of the fishing effort by the fleet.
- In 2017/18, 4163 albacore were measured, amounting to approximately 1.0% of the total number of albacore landed. Shed sampling covered 230 fishing days, amounting to 5.4% of the fishing effort by the fleet.
- In 2018/19, 5258 albacore were measured, amounting to approximately 1.7% of the total number of albacore landed. Shed sampling covered 282 fishing days, amounting to 5.7% of the fishing effort by the fleet.

South Pacific albacore stock assessment

As reported at the 1st audit, an updated stock assessment for the southern albacore stock was undertaken in 2018, incorporating data to the end of 2016. An updated stock assessment is scheduled to be undertaken in 2021.
The general conclusions of the 2018 assessment (WCPFC-SC 2018) included that:

- While biomass is estimated to have declined initially, estimates of spawning potential, and biomass vulnerable to the various longline fisheries, have been stable or possibly increasing slightly over the past 20 years. This has been influenced mainly by the estimated recruitment, which has generally been somewhat higher since 2000 than in the two decades previous.
- Most models also estimate an increase in spawning and longline vulnerable biomass since about 2011, driven by some high estimated recruitments, particularly around 2009.
- A steady increase in fishing mortality of adult age-classes is estimated to have occurred over most of the assessment period, accelerating since the 1990s but declining following the decline in longline catch seen since 2010. Juvenile fishing mortality increased until around 1990 and has remained stable at a low level since that time.
- Key stock assessment results across all models in the structural uncertainty grid show a wide range of estimates. All models indicate that south Pacific albacore is above the limit reference point (of $0.2SB_{F=0}$), with overall median depletion for 2016 ($SB_{latest}/SB_{F=0}$) estimated at 0.52 (80 percentile range 0.37- 0.69).
- Recent average fishing mortality is estimated to be well below F_{MSY} (median F_{recent}/F_{MSY} =0.2, 80 percentile range 0.08-0.41).

Based on the uncertainty grid adopted by the 14th session of the Scientific Committee, management advice to the Commission was that the south Pacific albacore tuna spawning biomass is very likely to be above the biomass LRP and recent F is very likely below F_{MSY}, hence the stock is not experiencing overfishing (100% probability $F < F_{MSY}$) and is not in an overfished condition (100% probability SB_{recent} > LRP) (WCPFC-SC 2018).

At SC15, a suite of stock projections based on the 2018 assessment were discussed (WCPFC-SC 2019a). SC15 noted that historical status and projections have a greater uncertainty in spawning stock depletion than observed for bigeye and yellowfin tuna because south Pacific albacore has a different grid which incorporates natural mortality and growth which gives a wider spread of uncertainty. Under recent fishery conditions of assuming that the 2018 catch remains constant, SC15 noted that the albacore stock is initially projected to increase as recent estimated relatively high recruitments support adult stock biomass, then decline as future recruitment is sampled from the long-term historical estimates The projections indicate that median F_{2020}/F_{MSY} = 0.24; median $SB_{2020}/SB_{F=0}$ = 0.43; and median SB_{2020}/SB_{MSY} = 3.2. The risk that $SB_{2020}/SB_{F=0}$ < LRP = 0%, $SB_{2020} < SB_{MSY}$ = 0% and $F_{2020} > F_{MSY}$ = 0%. However, the risk of the stock biomass breaching the LRP in 2035 is expected to be 23% (WCPFC-SC 2019a).

Given the available information, the surveillance team concluded that no scoring changes were required for P1 criteria.

Harvest Strategy development

As detailed in Akroyd and McLoughlin (2017), WCPFC CMM 2014-06 was adopted to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key fish stocks in the WCPO. The CMM identifies the elements that harvest strategies are to contain (including defined operational objectives, TRPs and LRPs for each stock, acceptable levels of risk of not breaching limit reference points, a monitoring strategy, decision rules that aim to achieve the TRP and avoid the LRP, and management strategy evaluation). The CMM required the development of a workplan for its implementation, first adopted at WCPFC12 (WCPFC12, 2015; Attachment Y). There have been several revisions to the workplan in subsequent years (*see Section 4.3 Harmonisation*).

The major management actions currently in place for south Pacific albacore are set out in CMM 2015-02. As discussed in the PCR for the fishery, CMM 2014-06 was adopted to define the development and implementation of the harvest strategy approach for key fisheries and stocks in the WCPO. The CMM identified the elements that harvest strategies are to contain. One aspect of CMM 2014-06 was the requirement to develop a work plan and indicative timeframes to adopt or refine harvest strategies for skipjack, bigeye, yellowfin, south Pacific albacore. A work plan was first agreed at WCPFC12 in 2105. The work plan has undergone several iterations since (as discussed below) and was subject to a substantial review at WCPFC16 and contains some significant changes in recognition of the needs of WCPFC CCMs as well as recent scientific advice (WCPFC16 2019). SPC is developing an interactive software tool (*Performance Indicators and Management Procedures Explorer - PIMPLE*), intended to facilitate the interactive exploration of the evaluation results, making it easier to compare and evaluate the relative performance of candidate management procedures (WCPFC16 2019).

In 2017, WCPFC14 agreed on an inter-sessional process to develop a "roadmap" to implement the elements needed for the effective conservation and management of south Pacific albacore, taking into account the updated 2018 stock

assessment. The Commission accepted New Zealand's offer to lead this inter-sessional working group. The terms of reference of this inter-sessional group included considering:

a. The elements necessary for the implementation of harvest strategy approach to the management of the stock;

b. an allocation process; and

c. monitoring and reporting priorities, and addressing of gaps, for all fisheries taking south Pacific albacore within the WCPFC convention area.

In summary, progress on elements of the harvest strategy for south Pacific albacore is that:

- In 2012, an LRP of 20% $SB_{current, F=0}$, was adopted;
- In 2018, an interim TRP of 56% $SB_{F=0}$ was adopted by WCPFC15 with the objective of achieving an 8% increase in CPUE for the southern longline fishery as compared to 2013 levels (WCPFC15 2018). The interim TRP will be revised should a future stock assessment indicate that this interim TRP will not result in the desired longline CPUE. A managed catch reduction of around 25% will be required to achieve the TRP and will occur over a period no longer than 20 years. WCPFC15 tasked the SC with examining a range of alternative catch pathways and timeframes that achieve the TRP.
- In 2018, at WCPFC15 the Commission agreed to amend/develop appropriate CMMs to implement a harvest control rule (HCR) with the objective of managing the south Pacific albacore spawning stock biomass towards the target level. The updated 2018 workplan under CMM 2014-06 required an HCR to be implemented by 2021 (WCPFC15 2018, Attachment I). It remains for CCMs to agree on a set of HCRs for testing, using management strategy evaluation, and implementation by the Commission.
- The draft outcomes of the 2019 Commission meeting indicate further changes to the harvest strategy work plan to accommodate "the need for additional work and time to explore and develop the details and practical implementation aspects of the multispecies framework covering all four tuna stocks" (WCPFC 2019). The workplan changes involve delays in the adoption of a management procedure[1] for south Pacific albacore by one year to 2022 (because of a clash in 2021 with an updated albacore assessment that may also necessitate an update to the MSE operating model), as well as a potential update of the interim TRP in accordance with the approach adopted by WCPFC15 (WCPFC16 2019; Attachment H). SPC has developed a harvest strategy display software package (PIMPLE), as a tool for use by CCMs to explore the responses of stocks to the selection of a variety of different performance indicators, using skipjack as an example (WCPFC16-2019-11).

A range of harvest strategy related research was presented at WCPFC16 for discussion. For example, as requested by WCPFC15, WCPFC16-2019-19 examines "*a range of alternative catch pathways and timeframes that achieve [the interim TRP], for consideration in 2019. In undertaking [this work] information from all fisheries will be included while noting that any management measures must take account of the impact of different gear types*." The document presents results from stochastic stock projections across the grid of 72 assessment models under future fishery scenarios to examine their performance in recovering the stock to the TRP.

WCPFC16 agreed to reinvigorate the South Pacific Albacore Roadmap Working Group in 2020, under the leadership of Fiji (previously led by New Zealand). The Group is to continue to work inter-sessionally and meet on the margins of the 2020 SC and Technical and Compliance Committee meetings to develop a workplan and terms of reference. WCPFC are anticipating development of bridging management arrangements under the South Pacific Albacore Roadmap (WCPFC16 2019, Attachment H).

In 2014, several Pacific Island countries agreed to establish the Tokelau Arrangement, a voluntary in-zone-based management arrangement for the south Pacific albacore seeking to establish catch limits with EEZs. Interim catch limits were proposed but discussions on these arrangements have since stalled.

2.2.5 Principle 2 – Environmental Impacts

There has been no change which would affect certification of the fishery. There are no records of endangered, threatened or protected species having been taken by the New Zealand albacore troll fishery (i.e. seabirds or marine mammals) and the fishery has no impact on the benthic environment. The fishery has a very low rate of bycatch with typically around 98% of the catch comprising the target species. Albacore comprised an estimated 99.5% of the catch

[1] The updated CMM 2014-06 work plan uses the term "Management Procedure" in place of "Harvest Control Rule". A management procedure is a formal specification of data collection and associated estimation model (e.g., the estimation of stock status through an analytical or empirical method) together with a HCR.

in 2018/19 (TMA 2020). Skipjack tuna, kahawai, southern bluefin tuna and kingfish were next-most prominent bycatch species

Due to the very low environmental risk associated with this fishery, very little on-board observer coverage has been undertaken in recent years (Table 2) (TMA 2020). However, 70 days of observer coverage have been scheduled by MPI for the albacore troll fishery in 2019/20, which would push the observer coverage up to around 2% of vessel days.

Table 2: Observer coverage in the albacore troll fishery over the most recent three fishing years.

Fishing Year	Observed days	Vessel days	Number of vessels	Observer coverage
2016-17	13	3670	98	0.4%
2017-18	0	4211	132	0.0%
2018-19	3	4854	130	0.06%

2.2.6 Principle 3 – Governance

The general management of WCPFC and the New Zealand Government has not changed to any substantial degree that would affect the client fishery. Changes in CMMs relevant to the fishery are discussed elsewhere in the report. The management objectives and management structure for New Zealand's domestic tuna fisheries are encapsulated by MPI's Annual Operational Plan for Highly Migratory Species and the National Fishery Plan for Highly Migratory Species, and annual reviews of management performance are provided in Annual Review Reports (https://www.fisheries.govt.nz/growing-and-harvesting/fisheries/fisheries-management/highly-migratory-species/).

Consultation

The TMA has an ongoing high level of consultation with MPI. Consultation in relation to the harvest strategy is discussed below in *Section 3*.

Compliance monitoring:

MPI's monitoring of albacore fishers' compliance with management requirements involves a multi-tiered approach through checking of fishing permits, auditing of Licensed Fish Receivers (LFRs), monitoring the unloading of catches, analysis of catch and effort reporting against VMS records, and aerial and surface surveillance. All vessels are now required to report fishing activities and catches in real-time via MPI's Electronic Monitoring System, thereby significantly enhancing MPI's fishery compliance capability (MPI 2020).

Within the EEZ the fishery is considered low risk given the nature of the fishing method. As a result, there has been no targeted compliance effort to monitor risks within the albacore fleet over the past year. However, the albacore fleet receives attention from fishery officers where commercial inspections carried out throughout the year within each of the regions aim to cover as much of the commercial fleet in each of the ports as possible.

Within the broader WCPFC region, a joint agency operation run between New Zealand, Australia, USA and France each year focuses on the albacore fishery, being the main species of tuna caught in the area of operation. The project seeks to deter IUU fishing and supports greater compliance within the WCPFC region.

Compliance update

MPI (2020) provides an update on the compliance approach covering the client fishery:

1. MPI maintains a range of capability, measures and interventions to enforce relevant management requirements, including permitting, placement of observers (70 days allocated for the 2019/20 year), auditing of licensed fish receivers, port inspections and monitored unloading of catch, analysis of catch and effort reporting with comparison against VMS and observer reports, aerial surveillance, and at sea surveillance and inspection.
2. The Ministry for Primary Industries has introduced throughout 2019 new requirements for reporting catch and positional data. To date, 121 of the 130 vessels fishing for albacore have transitioned to the new electronic catch and position reporting requirements, with the remainder unable to fish until they have also transitioned to electronic reporting.

3. MPI's approach to ensure effective fisheries compliance is based on a graduated model that includes voluntary, assisted, directed and enforced interventions, depending on a range of considerations like prior history of offending and the level of offending detected.
4. Fishers operating in the MSC certified albacore stock comply with a range of requirements including provision of catch documentation.
5. MPI continues to work with representatives from commercial fishing companies that operate in the MSC certified albacore stock to improve areas where compliance risk remains, regardless of the magnitude of risk, to ensure any ongoing issues are resolved in a practical and timely manner.

2.2.7 Any developments or changes within the fishery which impact traceability [or the ability to segregate between fish from the Unit of Certification (UoC) and fish from outside the UoC (non-certified fish)]

No changes and no traceability issues. The UoC includes all New Zealand vessels with a permit to catch albacore using troll fishing. The only potential risk would be if non-certified longline-caught albacore were to be passed off as having been troll-caught. As the troll fishery catches close to 90% of the total albacore catch the effect of any such transgression would be minor. All LFR establishments receiving albacore have been made aware by TMA that only troll-caught albacore is eligible to be sold against the MSC certification. All of the LFRs have MSC Chain of Custody certification.

2.3 Version Details

Table 3. Fisheries program documents versions

Document	Version number
MSC Fisheries Certification Process	**Version 2.1**
MSC Fisheries Standard	**Version 2.0**
MSC General Certification Requirements	**Version 2.4.1**
MSC Surveillance Reporting Template	**Version 2.01**

3 Results

3.1 Surveillance results overview

3.1.1 Summary of conditions

Table 4. Summary of conditions

Condition number	Condition	Performance Indicator (PI)	Status	PI original score	PI revised score
1	SI a) By the fourth surveillance audit, demonstrate that the harvest strategy for albacore tuna is responsive to the state of the stock and the elements of the harvest strategy work together towards achieving stock management objectives reflected in PI 1.1.1 SG80.	1.2.1	**On target**	**70**	**70**
2	SI a) By the fourth surveillance audit, demonstrate that well defined HCRs are in place that ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as the PRI is approached, are expected to keep the stock fluctuating around a target level consistent with (or above) MSY. SI b) By the fourth surveillance audit, provide evidence that the HCRs are likely to be robust to the main uncertainties. SI c) By the fourth surveillance audit, demonstrate that available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.	1.2.2	**On target**	**60**	**60**
3	SI (b). By the fourth surveillance audit (considering the updated South Pacific albacore stock assessment due in 2018 and consequent management advice) demonstrate that WCPFC decision-making processes have responded to the albacore catch rate issue by putting in place an appropriate harvest strategy or other suitable management measures. (Score 75).	3.2.2	**Closed**	**75**	**80**

3.1.2 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data

Table 5. Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data

TAC	Year	**2018/19**	Amount	**No TAC**
UoA share of TAC	Year	**2018/19**	Amount	**N/A**
UoA share of total TAC	Year	**2018/19**	Amount	**N/A**
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (most recent)	**2018/19**	Amount	**UoC troll catch 2328 t** **Total albacore catch 2692 t**
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (second most recent)	**2017/18**	Amount	**UoC troll catch 2579 t** **Total albacore catch 2642 t**

3.1.3 Recommendations

No recommendations proposed.

3.2 Conditions

Table 6. Conditions

Condition 1

Performance Indicator	1.2.1
Score	70
Justification	See Akroyd and McLoughlin (2017), p65.
Condition	SI a) By the fourth surveillance audit, demonstrate that the harvest strategy for albacore tuna is responsive to the state of the stock and the elements of the harvest strategy work together towards achieving stock management objectives reflected in PI 1.1.1 SG80.
Milestones	At the first annual surveillance audit and subsequent surveillance audits, the client will provide evidence that it is actively working to ensure that the harvest strategy for WCPO albacore tuna is responsive to the state of the stock and that the elements of the harvest strategy work together towards achieving the management objectives reflected in the target and limit reference points. This evidence will include a summary of the actions taken by the client and other relevant parties to achieve this outcome in alignment with the WCPFC 2015 agreed workplan (WCPFC12, 2015; Attachment Y). As required by the workplan, a target reference point for south Pacific albacore will be adopted by the 2016 Commission meeting. Score 70. At the fourth surveillance audit, the client will provide evidence that the harvest strategy is responsive to the state of the stock and that the elements of the harvest strategy work together towards achieving management objectives reflected in in PI 1.1.1 SG80. Score 80.
Consultation on condition	The client will consult and coordinate with the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, other members of the WCPFC, FFA and SPC as required. The client will also consult with other stakeholders in fishing for south Pacific albacore, including environmental and industry NGOs as appropriate. A letter written specifically to support the Client Action Plan from MPI has been provided and can be found in Appendix 1.4 (of the PCR).
Progress on Condition (Year 1)	The client update report provided to the audit team (TMA, 2018) provides details of steps taken to satisfy the requirements for the 1st year of the client action plan (CAP). The CAP is heavily reliant on MPI's initiatives in regard to bringing about the required WCPFC fisheries management changes. MPI, through its International Policy Directorate, has provided the assurance of the NZ Government's commitment towards securing the implementation of appropriate management measures for albacore in the WCPFC and domestically (MPI, 2016; Appendix 1.4 of Akroyd and McLoughlin, 2017 and MPI, 2019). TMA (2018) outlines NZ WCPFC14 delegation initiatives as follows: • Proposed CMM for the development of an improved south Pacific albacore measure, developed by New Zealand (WCPFC14-2017-DP14). This draft CMM had as its objectives to: ➢ Establish agreed management objectives ➢ Determine work plans towards reaching an interim catch limit for southern albacore and the apportionment of the catch limit between EEZs and the High Seas; the development of improved monitoring capability through the introduction of electronic catch documentation; the implementation of a Harvest Strategy. • At an intercessional meeting to progress the FFA consultative draft CMM to establish a limit for SPA, New Zealand provided a presentation on the development of candidate

	management objectives and participated in the further development of a draft bridging CMM for south Pacific albacore (WCPFC14-2017-IM-SPA1). TMA (2018) also outlines TMA initiatives in 2017: • Signatory to a letter submitted by the WCPO Tuna MSC Alignment Group to WCPFC members, Cooperating Non-members, Participating Territories and Observers via the WCPFC Executive Director, calling for WCPFC14 to adopt appropriate management measures for tunas; supported by 21 NGOs and fishing industry organisations (MSC Alignment Group, 2017). • Signatory to a letter submitted by ISSF to WCPFC14 Heads of Delegation seeking their leadership in progressing the adoption of Harvest Strategies; supported by 26 NGOs and fishing industry organisations (ISSF, 2017). • In September, 2017 TMA became a member of the International Pole & Line Foundation (IPNLF), in support of improved management of tuna fisheries and in recognition of the value of sustainable 'one-by-one' tuna fishing methods (IPNLF, 2017). As described in the NZATTF MSC public certification report (Akroyd and McLoughlin, 2017), several South Pacific nations have developed and agreed to the Tokelau Arrangement, a formal expression of an existing cooperative understanding on individual zone limitations on catch of south Pacific albacore tuna developed at meetings of the FFA Sub-committee on South Pacific Tuna and Billfish. The Tokelau Arrangement provides a framework for the development of cooperative zone-based management of south Pacific albacore tuna fisheries, intended to result in self-imposed limits on total allowable catches by countries (signatories as at October 2015 were Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). The initiative highlights the intention of Pacific nations intend to move forward with or without WCPFC consensus and thereby pressure WCPFC to adopt compatible measures (TMA, 2018). At the stakeholder conference held for this audit, MPI indicated that Solomon Islands have withdrawn from the Arrangement (as at October 2017). This has placed the future of the Arrangement in doubt, with further discussion to take place at the Forum Fisheries Agency meeting to be held in May 2018. New Zealand has also been an active participant in Te Vaka Moana, a group of Pacific Island Fisheries Administrations (Cook Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau and Tonga) which aims to protect and enhance associated long-term economic benefits able to be derived from fisheries and protect the important contribution fisheries make to the food security of the communities. This has provided an additional venue to promote the development of harvest strategies at WCPFC. Unfortunately, MPI have indicated that the future funding of this arrangement are in doubt. *WCPFC progress* WCPFC CMM 2014-06 was adopted to develop and implement a harvest strategy approach for key fish stocks in the WCPO. It required the development of a workplan which was first adopted at WCPFC12 in 2015 (WCPFC12, 2015; Attachment Y). This workplan was subsequently amended at WCPFC13 (December 2016). Key objectives for WCPFC13 for south Pacific albacore under the workplan were to record management objectives and agree acceptable levels of risk for both stocks, and to agree a target reference point. Despite a proposal for a TRP put forward by FFA, none was adopted at WCPFC13, nor were other aspects of the harvest strategy agreed (there was agreement that an acceptable level of risk could not be >20%). A revised workplan (WCPFC, 2016; Attachment N) was agreed which pushed the key decisions forward to WCPFC14, the next Commission meeting The major outcome for WCPFC14 was to be the adoption of a TRP. The workplan timeline was also was revised such that HCR adoption is pushed back to 2021 (WCPFC14, 2017).
Progress on Condition (Year 2)	*NZ delegation initiatives:* The South Pacific Albacore Virtual Intersessional Working Group, established at WCPFC14 to develop an agreed roadmap to progress implementation of a south pacific albacore harvest

strategy, has been chaired by New Zealand (WCPFC15-2018-SPalbroadmap). The terms of reference of the Working Group are to consider management issues including:

- The elements necessary for implementation of the Harvest Strategy approach to management of the stock;
- an allocation process; and
- monitoring and reporting priorities, and addressing gaps for all fisheries taking south Pacific albacore in the WCPFC Convention area.

The four main elements of the roadmap are:

- Review of the current measures;
- SC14 advice to WCPFC15 on technical aspects of the south Pacific albacore harvest strategy;
- TCC14 advice to WCPFC15 on monitoring and reporting gaps in the south Pacific albacore fishery, as well as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Territories implementation considerations;
- Limits - taking into account the 2018 stock assessment, recommendation an overall limit for the fishery, how it could be distributed (taking into account the interests of SIDS and Territories) and the actions required to achieve biological and economic stability in the fishery.

New Zealand organized two inter-sessional meetings of the Working Group, met with FFA CCMs in advance of WCPFC15 and additionally held a meeting on the margins of the Commission meeting where a draft workplan was presented which aimed to achieve adoption of harvest control rules for albacore by 2021.

New Zealand provided a summary to WCPFC15 of inputs by the SC, TCC and the Commission over the period 2010-2018 regarding the requirements of CMM2010-05 and CMM2015-02 (WCPFC15-2018-SPalbroadmap_suppl). The updated work plan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM2014-06 remains unchanged for albacore.

MPI has also been actively engaged in progressing regional fisheries management initiatives for tuna via the Tokelau Arrangement, with the objective of achieving the adoption of Harvest Strategies by Coastal States thus providing pressure for WCPFC to adopt compatible measures. However, this initiative appears to have stalled. Solomon Islands, which has the largest albacore fishery in the South Pacific, have opted out of the Tokelau Arrangement, supporting PNA's Vessel Day Scheme approach rather than a catch-based system, and other PICs may follow.

WCPFC Harvest Strategy progress and Interim Target Reference Point adoption

SPC provided WCPFC15 with a range of potential outcomes associated with maintaining the average south Pacific albacore catches for the period 2013-2015 into the future, to assist CCMs in deciding on an appropriate TRP for south Pacific albacore (WCPFC15-2018-10_rev1).

WCPFC15 subsequently adopted an interim Target Reference Point for South Pacific albacore as follows (WCPFC15 2018):

1. WCPFC15 agreed on an interim TRP for south Pacific albacore at 56% of spawning stock biomass in the absence of fishing ($0.56SB_{F=0}$) with the objective of achieving an 8% increase in CPUE for the southern longline fishery as compared to 2013 levels. If a future stock assessment indicates that this interim TRP will not result in the desired longline CPUE, then the interim TRP will be revised in order to meet this objective. The TRP shall be reviewed every 3 years, consistent with the south Pacific albacore assessment schedule.

2. The Commission shall amend or develop appropriate conservation and management measures to implement a harvest control rule, developed in accordance with CMM 2014-06, with the objective of maintaining the south Pacific albacore spawning stock biomass at the target level on average and according to the timeframes specified in paragraph 3, below.

	3. In order to manage the required reduction in catches, the timeline for achieving the interim TRP shall be no later than 20 years. The Science Service Provider is tasked with identifying a range of alternative catch pathways and timeframes that achieve this, for consideration in 2019. 4. In undertaking the assessment identified in paragraph 3, information from all fisheries will be included while noting that any management measures must take account of the impact of different gear types. 5. The Scientific Committee shall refer to the TRP in its assessment of the status of the WCPO south Pacific albacore tuna stock and in reporting to the Commission on management advice and implications for this stock. 6. Considering that the distribution of the south Pacific albacore stock goes beyond the WCPFC Convention area and the management of this stock is the responsibility of both WCPFC and IATTC, the Commission requested the Scientific Services Provider to coordinate with the IATTC scientific staff with the view to consider including the entire South Pacific in future assessments. As at previous Commission meetings, the work plan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM2014-06 was again updated at WCPFC15. The only change for albacore for coming years was the tasking of SPC to identify a range of alternative catch pathways to the interim TRP and timeframes that achieve this. WCPFC15 agreed that the annual meeting in 2019 would be a 6-day meeting with additional time devoted for the Commission to discuss harvest strategies. *TMA initiatives:* TMA's Client Action Plan is heavily reliant on MPI's initiatives in regard to bringing about the required fisheries management changes by WCPFC. Following a request from TMA, MPI has, through its International Policy Directorate, provided the assurance of the New Zealand government's ongoing commitment towards securing the implementation of appropriate management measures for albacore in the Western and Central Pacific, and domestically (MPI, 2016). In November 2018, TMA renewed its request to MPI's delegation to WCPFC15, urging them to continue to vigorously promote the development of a cohesive management strategy for southern albacore (TMA, 2018). TMA also provided input to MPI on whether troll-caught albacore should be included in the harvest control rule and if so, whether there should be a dispensation in the event a catch reduction was signalled by the HCR, given that the troll fishery exclusively targets juvenile fish (RT, 2018).
Progress on Condition (Year 3)	TMA provided the auditors with a comprehensive Client Checklist and Update Report (TMA 2020). The information below is sourced from that report. *NZ delegation initiatives:* New Zealand continues to promote the adoption of harvest strategy elements for south Pacific albacore through participation in FFA meetings and inter-sessional working group (IWG) meetings of the WCPFC, aimed at the development of an agreed roadmap for implementation of a Harvest Strategy. FFA members wish to see the stock restored to the Target Reference Point (TRP) level of biomass as soon as is economically possible. To that end, FFA members submitted a proposal to WCPFC16 advocating a revised roadmap to achieve this objective (WCPFC16-2019-DP05). WCPFC16 agreed to reinvigorate the South Pacific Albacore Roadmap Working Group in 2020, under the leadership of Fiji. The Group is to continue to work inter-sessionally and meet on the margins of the 2020 SC and Technical and Compliance Committee meetings to develop a workplan and terms of reference. New Zealand is supporting the capacity development of Pacific Island States to build their understanding of the issues to better enable their participation in this process. New Zealand will also attend IWG meetings, scheduled to be held in Samoa on 10 August (ahead of the Scientific Committee meeting) and in Pohnpei on 30 September 2020 (following the Technical and Compliance Committee meeting.

During 2019, New Zealand funded the SPC to develop a Harvest Strategy display software package (*Performance Indicators and Management Procedures Explorer - PIMPLE*), as a tool for use by CCMs to explore the responses of stocks to the selection of a variety of different performance indicators, using skipjack as an example. Progress with implementation of the software was examined at WCPFC16 (WCPFC16-2019-11).

The updated workplan for the adoption of harvest strategies under CMM2014-06 has undergone several iterations. The workplan was further revised at WCPFC16 to accommodate the additional time required to 'explore and develop the details and practical implementation aspects of the multispecies framework covering all four tuna stocks'. The updated workplan delays adoption of a management procedure for albacore by one year, to 2022, because of a clash in 2021 with an updated albacore assessment and a potential update of the interim TRP in accordance with the WCPFC15 adopted approach (WCPFC16 2019; Appendix H).

TMA initiatives:

TMA's Client Action Plan is heavily reliant on Fisheries New Zealand's (FNZ) initiatives in regard to achieving the adoption of the required fisheries management measures by WCPFC.

Following a request from TMA, MPI has, through its International Policy Directorate, provided the assurance of the New Zealand Government's ongoing commitment towards securing the implementation of appropriate management measures for albacore in the Western and Central Pacific, and domestically (MPI 2016).

In June 2019, TMA renewed its request to MPI's delegations to WCPFC committee meetings and the annual Commission meeting, urging them to continue to vigorously promote the development and adoption of appropriate management measures for southern albacore (TMA 2019).

The MSC Alignment Group was first established in 2014 to provide a mechanism for client groups of fisheries certified and under assessment against the MSC fisheries standard to consult and coordinate activities to pursue the adoption of robust harvest strategies. The Group was disbanded in 2017 but reinvigorated in 2019 and met in the margins of the WCPFC16. In August 2019, TMA participated in a webinar of the Group, held to discuss ways to progress management strategy objectives for key market tuna species in the WCPO (https://www.dropbox.com/s/6o65qjd50c2bezc/Alignment%20Group%20Webinar%20-%2022%20Aug%202019.mp4?dl=0). A TMA representative attended a meeting of the Alignment Group on the fringes of WCPFC16, where participants from 10 MSC certified tuna fisheries and five eNGOs discussed and debated options to ensure continued fishery certification in light of the slow progress being made by the Commission in adopting the required management measures for market tuna species (WCPO Tuna MSC Alignment Group, 2019). The meeting, which was co-hosted by the MSC, resolved to request CABs to revisit their joint Principle 1 Variation Request to MSC on the harmonization of conditions and deadlines for MSC certified tuna fisheries. The objective is for the MSC to agree to a revised timeline for the adoption of management measures, pegged against WCPFC's current Workplan rather than the 2014 Workplan as is currently specified (TMA 2020). In January 2020, TMA wrote to Lloyd's Register requesting their consideration to revisit the Variation Request (TMA 2020). In February 2020, TMA wrote to eNGOs requesting their consideration to support a revision of the Variation Request (TMA 2020).

On 26 November 2019, a TMA representative attended FNZ's annual Fishery Plan Advisory Group meeting to participate in a discussion on research and management needs for New Zealand's highly migratory species and to highlight the ongoing requirement for work to be undertaken towards the adoption of management measures for key WCPO tuna stocks (TMA 2020).

In December 2019, a TMA representative was a member of the New Zealand delegation to the annual WCPFC Commission meeting (WCPFC16), where discussions were held with other certified albacore tuna fisheries and with eNGOs on possible strategies to advance the adoption of management measures by WCPFC (TMA 2020).

WCPFC Harvest Strategy progress

As indicated in the 2nd surveillance report for the fishery (Akroyd and McLoughlin, 2019, the CMM 2014-06 workplan for the implementation of harvest strategies has undergone several modifications since it was first developed. Progress to date on the implementation of a harvest strategy to satisfy CMM 2014-06 requirements includes the adoption of a limit reference point (20% $SB_{current, F=0}$) in 2012, and adoption of an interim target reference point (56% $SB_{F=0}$) in 2018. Progress towards implementation of the harvest strategy is summarised in Figure 3.

Harvest strategy element	South Pacific Albacore
Management Objectives	Noted
Performance Indicators	Identified
Limit Reference Points	Adopted
Target Reference Point	Interim
Harvest Control Rules	Example HCRs
Management Strategy Evaluation	Developing
Monitoring Strategy	

Figure 3. Progress towards implementing the south Pacific albacore harvest strategy. Dark green shading indicates substantial progress has been made; light green indicates work is currently underway; orange indicates work has not yet begun. (adapted from WCPFC16-2019-09).

At WCPFC15 (December 2018) the CMM 2014-06 workplan was further amended (WCPFC15 2018, Attachment I). The major item to be progressed for the south Pacific albacore harvest strategy development was identified as the development and consideration of advice on potential harvest control rules. A range of harvest strategy related research was presented at WCPFC16 for discussion. Relevant research and technical documents are available on the SC15 and WCPFC16 websites. WCPFC16 reviewed the management objectives for south Pacific albacore and considered that there was no need to review them on an annual basis, but they should be amended as required. WCPFC16 agreed to further changes to the workplan (WCPFC16, 2019, Attachment H). This update indicates that the workplan was always intended to be a living document and updated as needed. The updated plan identifies that whilst development of the harvest strategy for south Pacific albacore tuna on a single species basis is ongoing, eventually a multispecies framework will be developed. The need for additional work and time to explore and develop the details and practical implementation aspects of the multispecies framework (covering all four tuna stocks) was identified.

For south Pacific albacore, the updated plan delays adoption of a management procedure (harvest control rule) by one year (to 2022) because of a clash in 2021 with an updated albacore assessment (that may also necessitate an update to the MSE operating model) and a potential update of the interim TRP in accordance with the WCPFC15 adopted approach. The WCPFC16 revised workplan notes that WCPFC are anticipating development of bridging management arrangements under the south Pacific Albacore Roadmap (WCPFC16, 2019, Attachment H).

The activities listed in the latest workplan for south Pacific albacore are as follows:

2020: Develop management procedures and Management strategy evaluation

- SC provide advice on performance of potential management procedures. (ongoing);
- TCC consider the implications of potential Management procedures. (ongoing);
- Commission consider advice on progress towards management procedures. (ongoing).

2021: Develop management procedures and Management strategy evaluation

- SC provide advice on performance of candidate management procedures;
- TCC consider the implications of candidate management procedures;
- Commission consider and refine a candidate set of management procedures.

2022: as for 2021; **Adopt a management procedure**.

Status	On the basis that progress is being made and the client is meeting the requirements of the client action plan, the Condition is **on target**.
Additional information	The revised timeline of the CMM 2014-06 workplan will not result in the requirements of this Condition being met by the 2021 hard deadline of the 2019 CAB Variation (see *Section 4.3*). As indicated above, the meeting of the MSC Alignment Group in the margins of WCPFC16 resolved to request CABs to revisit their joint Principle 1 Variation Request to MSC on the harmonisation of conditions and deadlines for MSC certified tuna fisheries.

Condition 2

Performance Indicator	1.2.2
Score	60
Justification	See Akroyd and McLoughlin (2017), p69.
Condition	SI a) By the fourth surveillance audit, demonstrate that well defined HCRs are in place that ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as the PRI is approached, are expected to keep the stock fluctuating around a target level consistent with (or above) MSY. SI b) By the fourth surveillance audit, provide evidence that the HCRs are likely to be robust to the main uncertainties. SI c) By the fourth surveillance audit, demonstrate that available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.
Milestones	At the first annual surveillance audit and subsequent surveillance audits, the client will provide evidence that it is actively working to ensure that well defined harvest control rules taking into account the main uncertainties are in place for albacore tuna that are consistent with the harvest strategy and ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as limit reference points are approached. This evidence will include a summary of the actions taken by the client and other relevant parties to achieve this outcome in alignment with the WCPFC 2015 agreed workplan (WCPFC, 2015; Attachment Y). Score 60. By the fourth surveillance audit, the client will provide evidence that well-defined harvest control rules taking into account the main uncertainties are in place for albacore tuna that are consistent with the harvest strategy and ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as limit reference points are approached. Score 80.
Consultation on condition	The client will consult and coordinate with the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, other members of the WCPFC, FFA and SPC as required. The client will also consult with other stakeholders in fishing for south Pacific albacore, including environmental and industry NGOs as appropriate. A letter written specifically to support the Client Action Plan from MPI has been provided and is available within Appendix 1.4 (of the PCR),
Progress on Condition (Year 1)	The Year 1 CAP requirements predominantly require MPI support. The progress against the condition and MPI's initiatives are as described for condition 1.

Progress on Condition (Year 2)	The Year 2 CAP requirements predominantly require MPI support. In the main, the progress against the condition and MPI's initiatives are as described for Condition 1. No specific progress on harvest control rules was implemented at WCPFC15. The South Pacific Albacore Virtual Intersessional Working Group, chaired by New Zealand, is tasked to continue work inter-sessionally to develop the *Roadmap for Effective Conservation and Management of South Pacific Albacore* including progressing the adoption of harvest control rules.
Progress on Condition (Year 3)	As for Condition 1, above.
Status	The Condition is **on target**.
Additional information	As for Condition 1.

Condition 3

Performance Indicator	3.2.2 b
Score	(b) Decision-making processes respond to serious and other important issues identified in relevant research, monitoring, evaluation and consultation, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner and take account of the wider implications of decisions.
Justification	This condition was raised due to WCPFC's lack of responsiveness to declining catch rates (particularly for the longline sector). The interim TRP adopted at WCPFC15 recognizes this in its objective to achieve an 8% increase in catch per unit of effort for the southern longline fishery as compared to 2013 levels. WCPFC15 indicates that if a future stock assessment indicates that the interim TRP will not result in the desired longline CPUE, then the interim TRP will be revised in order to meet this objective. The TRP shall be reviewed every 3 years, consistent with the south Pacific albacore assessment schedule. However, WCPFC also indicates that the required reduction in catches has a timeline for achieving the interim target reference point of no later than 20 years. SPC, the science service provider, is tasked with identifying a range of alternative catch pathways and timeframes that achieve this, for consideration in 2019.
Condition	By the fourth surveillance audit (considering the updated south Pacific albacore stock assessment due in 2018 and consequent management advice) demonstrate that WCPFC decision-making processes have responded to the albacore catch rate issue by putting in place an appropriate harvest strategy or other suitable management measures.
Milestones	<u>Year 1 (Dec 2018)</u> Engage with the Ministry for Primary Industries towards ensuring that delegations to meetings of regional bodies and the Commission: • Deliver the message that development by the SPC of harvest strategy elements for SP albacore, as prescribed by CMM 2014-06, should incorporate agreed biological, ecological, economic and/or social objectives. <u>Year 2 (Dec 2019)</u> Engage with the Ministry for Primary Industries towards ensuring that delegations: Collaborate with FFA members, industry sectors and environmental NGOs towards encouraging the WCPFC to agree on and adopt a harvest strategy for the SP albacore stock that includes agreed economic and/or social objectives.

Consultation on condition	As for Condition 1 and 2
Progress on Condition (Year 3)	This condition was raised due to WCPFC's lack of responsiveness to declining catch rates (particularly for the longline sector). WCPFC decision-making processes allow for appropriate consideration of serious and important issues through its committees (SC and TCC) and at the Commission itself. The WCPFC responds to these issues through CMMs and Resolutions and these provide transparent responses to scientific, technical, social, and cultural issues. Stock assessments and studies presented at the SC identify serious issues, such as overfishing of bigeye tuna from 2011 – 2017, at the regional level, using an older assessment model and life history parameters. However, since SC14 (2018), an updated assessment has determined this stock to no longer have an overfished status, nor is overfishing occurring. These determinations were reaffirmed at WCPFC-SC (2019). These issues are now being addressed through agreed CMM 2018-01 for example. The system allows Commission members to be fully informed of the issues under consideration and enables participation in informed decision-making. The Commission decision-making is transparent and transparency is a requirement of the Convention (Article 21). The appreciation of the "timeliness" of decision-making is more likely a result of the governance arrangements applying to cooperative regional fisheries management (consensus-based decision-making, annual meetings etc.). So, given the international context, response times are probably "best practice" (Medley and Gascoigne, 2017). The WCPFC responds in a "timely manner" to other important issues in its decision-making such as the adoption of a target reference point (TRP) for south Pacific albacore tuna, as well as continuing to work towards adopting a full Harvest Strategy under a formal workplan (CMM 2014-06 – revised at WCPFC15 in 2018). An updated 2018 assessment indicated the south Pacific albacore stock not to be in an overfished state and overfishing was not taking place (Tremblay-Boyer et al., 2018), and nominal longline CPUE increased in 2017 (Brouwer, et al., 2018). A range of harvest strategy related research was presented at WCPFC16 for discussion. SPC, the science service provider, was tasked in 2019 with identifying a range of alternative catch pathways and timeframes that achieve the objective of the interim TRP (to achieve the desired longline CPUE. Results from stochastic stock projections across the grid of 72 assessment models, under future fishery scenarios to examine their performance, were considered by WCPFC16 (WCPFC16-2019-11). On the basis of progress made at WCPFC, SG60 and SG80 are met. However, SG100 is not met as it is not clear that all issues are dealt with in a timely manner. As for Conditions 1 & 2, NZ has been active in its approach to satisfying the requirements of this Conditions on the MSC certification of this fishery through avenues available to them and the Ministry of Primary Industries has been actively engaged in supporting the NZ TMA.
Status	The Condition is now met. See re-scoring below.
Additional information	The meeting of this condition is harmonised with recent assessments and surveillances for south Pacific albacore in the WCPO.

3.3 Client Action Plan

The Client Action Plan is available in the PCR (Akroyd and McLoughlin, 2017; https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/new-zealand-albacore-tuna-troll/@@assessments).

3.4 Re-scoring Performance Indicators

One Performance Indicator was re-scored as a result of the Condition being closed. The revised scoring table is presented here. Revised rationale is shown in red.

Evaluation Table for PI 3.2.2 – Decision-making processes

PI 3.2.2		The fishery-specific management system includes effective decision-making processes that result in measures and strategies to achieve the objectives, and has an appropriate approach to actual disputes in the fishery.		
Scoring Issue		SG 60	SG 80	SG 100
A	Decision-making processes			
	Guide post	There are some decision-making processes in place that result in measures and strategies to achieve the fishery-specific objectives.	There are **established** decision-making processes that result in measures and strategies to achieve the fishery-specific objectives.	
	Met?	Y	Y	N
	Justification	At the WCPFC level, decision-making processes are open, seek to apply the precautionary approach and use the best available information and are well documented. Consensus is the general rule for decision-making by Commission Members during the annual meetings. If consensus cannot be reached, voting, grounds for appealing decisions, conciliation and review are all part of the established decision-making process, as described in Article 20 of the Convention. The decision-making processes are operationalised through the processes of the Scientific Committee, the Technical and Compliance Committee and the Commission itself. The information used to inform decision making is published. Conservation and Management Measures are binding, but Resolutions are non-binding. All management measures apply equally inside EEZ and on high seas. Flag states enforce management measures on their own vessels and coastal states within their own EEZ. At the national level the Fisheries Act (specifically Sections 10, 11, and 12) clearly lays out the requirements for decision-making, and requires basing all decisions on the best available information (Section 10). The Annual Operational Plan implements the procedures for decision-making. The MPI prepares an Initial Position Paper (IPP) that provides the Ministry's initial proposals for issues needing decision. Subsequently, the Ministry will provide a Final Advice Paper (FAP) to the Minister for Primary Industries. The FAP will summarise the Ministry's and stakeholder's views on proposals and make recommendations to the Minister. A copy of the FAP and the Minister's letter setting out his final decisions will be posted on the MPI website as soon as these become available. Altogether, these processes result in measures and strategies to achieve the fishery-specific objectives, reaching the SG60 and SG80 at both regional and national level.		
B	Responsiveness of decision-making processes			
	Guide post	Decision-making processes respond to **serious issues** identified in relevant research, monitoring, evaluation and consultation, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner and take some account of the wider implications of decisions.	Decision-making processes respond to **serious and other important issues** identified in relevant research, monitoring, evaluation and consultation, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner and take	Decision-making processes respond to **all issues** identified in relevant research, monitoring, evaluation and consultation, in a transparent, timely and adaptive manner and take account of the wider implications of decisions.

PI 3.2.2		**The fishery-specific management system includes effective decision-making processes that result in measures and strategies to achieve the objectives, and has an appropriate approach to actual disputes in the fishery.**		
			account of the wider implications of decisions.	
	Met?	Y	Y	N
	Justification	WCPFC decision-making processes allow for appropriate consideration of serious and important issues through its committees (SC and TCC) and at the Commission itself. The WCPFC responds to these issues through CMMs and Resolutions and these provide transparent responses to scientific, technical, social, and cultural issues. Stock assessments and studies presented at the SC identify serious issues, such as overfishing of bigeye tuna from 2011 – 2017, at the regional level, using an older assessment model and life history parameters. However, since SC14 (2018), an updated assessment has determined this stock to no longer have an overfished status, nor is overfishing occurring. These determinations were reaffirmed at SC15 (2019). These issues are now being addressed through agreed CMM 2018-01 for example. The system allows Commission members to be fully informed of the issues under consideration and enables participation in informed decision- making. The Commission decision-making is transparent and transparency is a requirement of the Convention (Article 21). The appreciation of the "timeliness" of decision-making is more likely a result of the governance arrangements applying to cooperative regional fisheries management (consensus-based decision-making, annual meetings etc.). So, given the international context, response times are probably "best practice" (Medley and Gascoigne, 2017). The WCPFC responds in a "timely manner" to other important issues in its decision-making such as the adoption of a target reference point (TRP) for south Pacific albacore tuna, as well as continuing to work towards adopting a full Harvest Strategy under a formal Work Plan (CMM 2014-06 – revised at WCPFC15 in 2018). An updated 2018 assessment indicated the south Pacific albacore stock not to be in an overfished state and overfishing was not taking place (Tremblay-Boyer et al., 2018), and nominal longline CPUE increased in 2017 (Brouwer, et al., 2018). On this basis SG60 and SG80 are met. However, SG100 is not met as it is not clear that all issues are dealt with in a timely manner. SG60 and SG 80 requirements are met. SG100 is not met.		
C	Use of precautionary approach			
	Guide post		Decision-making processes use the precautionary approach and are based on best available information.	
	Met?		Y	
	Justification	The WCPFC Convention requires that the members of the Commission, directly and through the Commission, apply the precautionary approach. The Convention requires that Commission be more cautious when information is uncertain, unreliable or inadequate and does not use the absence of adequate scientific information as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures (Medley and Powers 2015). In all cases, decisions are required to be based on the best scientific information available, and the Commission makes adequate provision for this to be achieved. At the national level the Fisheries Act requires that MPI must follow the precautionary approach. Section 10 of the Fisheries Act Information principles states: "All persons exercising or performing functions, duties, or powers under this Act, in relation to the utilisation of fisheries resources or ensuring sustainability, shall take into account the following information principles: (a) Decisions should be based on		

PI 3.2.2		The fishery-specific management system includes effective decision-making processes that result in measures and strategies to achieve the objectives, and has an appropriate approach to actual disputes in the fishery.		
		the best available information: (b) Decision makers should consider any uncertainty in the information available in any case: (c) Decision makers should be cautious when information is uncertain, unreliable, or inadequate: (d) The absence of, or any uncertainty in, any information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take any measure to achieve the purpose of this Act. Therefore, evidence exists that decision making uses the precautionary approach and best available information, meeting the SG80.		
D	Accountability and transparency of management system and decision-making process			
	Guide post	Some information on the fishery's performance and management action is generally available on request to stakeholders.	**Information on the fishery's performance and management action is available on request**, and explanations are provided for any actions or lack of action associated with findings and relevant recommendations emerging from research, monitoring, evaluation and review activity.	Formal reporting to all interested stakeholders **provides comprehensive information on the fishery's performance and management actions** and describes how the management system responded to findings and relevant recommendations emerging from research, monitoring, evaluation and review activity.
	Met?	Y	Y	N
	Justification	At the regional level information and recommendations from research, monitoring, evaluation and performance review are published formally. Reports of WCPFC plenary sessions are published formally and are publicly available. Annual (Part 1) reports are submitted by members providing detailed reporting on catch, fleet size and other issues relating to the fishery. The WCPFC SC and TCC papers and reports on the web provide a high level of public access and transparency, showing how scientific information is used to inform management actions, which are then monitored for effectiveness and discussed at the Commission. This reporting represents good practice. However, while reports are available, it is not clear that they represent all information that is used in decision making. There is no formal, detailed explanation linking the information provided to the decision that results. In an international context, it is recognized that it is very difficult to give full explanations for all decisions, since this might undermine co-operation. Decisions are often negotiated outcomes with the trade-offs not always apparent. At the WCPFC level, SG60 and SG80 requirements are met. At the national level MPI provide a wide range of information to stakeholders. The documents include the Fisheries Act, Plenary documents, the National Fisheries Plan, the Annual Operating Plan, Statements of Intent, Initial Position Papers, press releases and reports. MPI provides formal reports consistent with formalised reporting and consultation processes such as the IPP/FAP process, the Stakeholder Consultation Process Standard or the National Fisheries Plan. Overall, SG60 and SG80 requirements are met at WCPFC and national levels. However, information is not comprehensive for all elements of the management system at the regional level and SG100 is not met.		
	Approach to disputes			

PI 3.2.2		The fishery-specific management system includes effective decision-making processes that result in measures and strategies to achieve the objectives, and has an appropriate approach to actual disputes in the fishery.		
E	Guide post	Although the management authority or fishery may be subject to continuing court challenges, it is not indicating a disrespect or defiance of the law by repeatedly violating the same law or regulation necessary for the sustainability for the fishery.	The management system or fishery is attempting to comply in a timely fashion with judicial decisions arising from any legal challenges.	The management system or fishery acts proactively to avoid legal disputes or rapidly implements judicial decisions arising from legal challenges.
	Met?	Y	Y	N
	Justification	The WCPFC dispute mechanism is set out in Article 31 of the Convention. The WCPFC has a consensus-based decision-making process, with provision for a two-chambered voting process requiring a 75% majority in both chambers if all efforts to reach a decision by consensus have been exhausted. WCPFC (the Commission) has not been subject to any court challenges to date. WCPFC members are party to all decisions at the WCPFC level, including participation in the Scientific Committee, and WCPFC general sessions where regional level final decisions are taken. Disputes/disagreements are typically resolved through WCPFC meetings (being members of WCPFC and agreeing to abide by WCPFC provisions) and the members have avoided legal disputes. The management system acts proactively to avoid legal disputes at the regional level by the prompt incorporation of CMMs into national legislation and the implementation of measures to support such legislation. At the national level Section VII Disputes Resolution of the Fisheries Act states that the section (a) applies to disputes about the effects of fishing (excluding fish farming) on the fishing activities of any person who has a current fishing interest provided for or authorized by or under this Act; but (b) does not apply to disputes about ensuring sustainability or about the effects of any fishing authorised under Part 9. Section VII further requires that the Minister publicly set out an approved statement of procedure for the resolution of such disputes. The Minister of Fisheries published in 1998 the dispute resolution procedures. The Minister's approved statement of procedure for the resolution of disputes consists of four steps, with each step in turn involving specific actions to be undertaken by the parties to the dispute to give effect to the requirements of Section VII of the Act: Dispute summary report by the party identifying the report Production and distribution of Initial Assessment Report demonstrating the dispute is about the effects of fishing, and does not involve issues associated with ensuring sustainability Negotiation and attempts at resolution Prepare an Outcome Report with conclusion of the process including resolution or not of the dispute. The parties to the dispute may make recommendations that involve sustainability or customary fishing that would require action beyond the authority of the Minister. The principles in the Fisheries Act require decision-makers to act: in accordance with law reasonably and fairly, in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Decisions that do not follow requirements are open to legal challenge. Legal challenges are uncommon in the fisheries, in part because of the collaborative decision making.		

PI 3.2.2		**The fishery-specific management system includes effective decision-making processes that result in measures and strategies to achieve the objectives, and has an appropriate approach to actual disputes in the fishery.**
		Therefore, the management system proactively acts to avoid disputes. Lack of judicial decisions does not provide direct evidence of rapid implementation, but the requirements of the Fisheries Act and MPI strongly suggest this would be the case. The fishery reaches the requirements of SG60, SG80. SG100 requirements are not met.
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OVERALL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SCORE:		80
CONDITION NUMBER (if relevant):		NA

3.4.1 Revised Principle Level Scores

Final Principle Scores

Principle	UoA 1 albacore tuna
Principle 1 – Target Species	84.2
Principle 2 – Ecosystem	94.7
Principle 3 – Management System	88.1

3.4.2 Summary of PI Level Scores

Principle	Component	Weight	Performance Indicator (PI)		Weight	Score
One	Outcome	0.333	1.1.1	Stock status	1.000	100
	Management	0.667	1.2.1	Harvest strategy	0.250	70
			1.2.2	Harvest control rules & tools	0.250	60
			1.2.3	Information & monitoring	0.250	80
			1.2.4	Assessment of stock status	0.250	95
Two	Primary species	0.200	2.1.1	Outcome	0.333	100
			2.1.2	Management strategy	0.333	90
			2.1.3	Information/Monitoring	0.333	90
	Secondary species	0.200	2.2.1	Outcome	0.333	100
			2.2.2	Management strategy	0.333	100
			2.2.3	Information/Monitoring	0.333	100
	ETP species	0.200	2.3.1	Outcome	0.333	100
			2.3.2	Management strategy	0.333	100
			2.3.3	Information strategy	0.333	80
	Habitats	0.200	2.4.1	Outcome	0.333	100
			2.4.2	Management strategy	0.333	100
			2.4.3	Information	0.333	100
	Ecosystem	0.200	2.5.1	Outcome	0.333	80
			2.5.2	Management	0.333	85
			2.5.3	Information	0.333	95
Three	Governance and policy	0.500	3.1.1	Legal &/or customary framework	0.333	90
			3.1.2	Consultation, roles & responsibilities	0.333	90
			3.1.3	Long term objectives	0.333	90
	Fishery specific management system	0.500	3.2.1	Fishery specific objectives	0.250	90
			3.2.2	Decision making processes	0.250	80
			3.2.3	Compliance & enforcement	0.250	85
			3.2.4	Monitoring & management performance evaluation	0.250	90

4 Appendices

4.1 Evaluation processes and techniques

4.1.1 Site visits

This off-site surveillance audit was carried out during the week of the 2nd March 2020, by Jo Akroyd (Team Leader) and Kevin McLoughlin, who comprised the assessment team for the fishery. The client provided the auditors with a Client Update Report summarizing developments in the fishery and progress against conditions. Discussions were held with the client representative, Rob Tilney.

4.1.2 Stakeholder participation

The surveillance audit was announced on 31 January 2020 and stakeholders were invited to participate in person or to provide written comment. Input to the audit was provided in writing by email from the client.

4.2 Stakeholder input

No additional input was received from stakeholders.

4.3 Harmonised fishery assessments (and 2019 CAB Variation Request)

The WCPFC pilot harmonisation meeting that took place in April 2016 is the only formal harmonisation meeting for south Pacific albacore and yellowfin tuna that has been undertaken. Subsequently, harmonisation discussions for Principle 1 have taken place via email between the CABs involved in MSC assessment of WCPFC fisheries.

On 14 February 2019, MSC accepted a variation request submitted by all fisheries CABs for Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) managed highly migratory stocks in the MSC programme, including tuna and swordfish. MSC has required overlapping fisheries to harmonise assessment outcomes, but not condition timelines. CABs sought the variation due to the inconsistencies between fisheries in addressing conditions, in particular the high number of outstanding conditions relating to harvest strategies, reference points and harvest control rules. The variation request proposed a "hard deadline" approach to Principle 1 condition timelines. As a result of the variation request, the deadline for closing harvest strategy conditions for south pacific albacore and yellowfin is 2021.

In brief, the outcomes of this variation request were that:

- fisheries certified against FCR v1.3: will be upgraded to v2.0 to at the next surveillance audit. No suspension action will be undertaken for fisheries that are behind target on P1 conditions raised against v1.3.
- fisheries already certified against FCR v2.0: Principle 1 conditions and timelines will be harmonised for all tuna fisheries on the same stock. A shared deadline for achievement of conditions is to be set, based on the most recent RFMO workplan (i.e. as at the time of the variation). The deadlines are specified in Appendix A of the variation (https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/new-zealand-albacore-tuna-troll/@@assessments).
- to facilitate harmonisation efforts between CABs, surveillance schedules of the relevant tuna fisheries will be aligned (to the extent that is practical) so that annual progress can be assessed collectively by CABs.

The current certification of the New Zealand albacore tuna troll fishery was under FCR v2.0. Consideration of the timelines for the fishery is given in *Section 3* of this report. Fisheries taking south Pacific albacore requiring harmonisation with this fishery are listed below (**Error! Reference source not found.**) along with the fishery Principle 1 scores (Table 9). Although some scores were not identical, the respective assessment teams have ensured that the Principle 1 scores are harmonised across assessments such that there are no material differences.

For Principle 3, this fishery also overlaps the other WCPFC fisheries listed below. This was taken into consideration during the initial assessment and during this surveillance. Harmonisation discussions took place in February 2020 regarding the closing of the condition on PI 3.2.2 (Decision-making processes). Consensus was reached between CABs that this condition should be closed.

Table 7 – Overlapping fisheries

Fishery name	Certification status and date
Fiji albacore and yellowfin longline fishery	Re-certified Jan 2018
AAFA and WFOA south Pacific albacore tuna	Re-certified Nov 2018
Walker Seafood Australia albacore, yellowfin tuna and swordfish	Re-scored at 4th surveillance Feb 2020; as per CAB Variation Request
SZLC, CSFC & FZLC Cook Islands EEZ south Pacific albacore & yellowfin longline	Re-scored at 4th surveillance Feb 2020; as per CAB Variation Request
Solomon Islands longline albacore and yellowfin fishery	Certified Nov 2019
American Samoa EEZ albacore and yellowfin longline fishery	Certified Nov 2017
French Polynesia albacore and yellowfin longline fishery	Certified Jun 2018
SZLC, CSFC & FZLC Cook Islands EEZ south Pacific albacore & yellowfin longline	Re-scored at 4th surveillance Feb 2020; as per CAB Variation Request

Kiribati albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tuna longline fishery	In assessment
Pan Pacific yellowfin, bigeye and albacore longline fishery	In assessment

Table 8 – Overlapping fisheries

Supporting information	
See comments above.	
Was either FCP v2.1 Annex PB1.3.3.4 or PB1.3.4.5 applied when harmonising?	**n/a**
Date of harmonisation meeting	**n/a**
If applicable, describe the meeting outcome	**n/a**

Table 9 – Scoring outcomes – South Pacific albacore

Performance Indicators (PIs)	1.1.1	1.2.1	1.2.2	1.2.3	1.2.4
New Zealand albacore (this fishery)	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**95**
Fiji albacore and yellowfin longline	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**95**
AAFA and WFOA south Pacific albacore tuna	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**85**
Walker Seafood Australia albacore, yellowfin tuna and swordfish	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**85**
SZLC, CSFC & FZLC Cook Islands EEZ south Pacific albacore & yellowfin longline	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**95**
Solomon Islands longline albacore and yellowfin fishery	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**85**
American Samoa EEZ albacore and yellowfin longline fishery	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**95**
French Polynesia albacore and yellowfin longline fishery	**100**	**70**	**60**	**80**	**95**
Pan Pacific yellowfin, bigeye and albacore longline fishery	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Kiribati albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tuna longline fishery	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**

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