

# Tuna Market Intelligence

Issue 9, February 19, 2015

*Your fortnightly report on trends and influencers on the global tuna market from the Pacific Islands.*

## MARKET UPDATE

Still no indications yet that tuna prices are set for and increase in the Bangkok market.

Insiders report the price remains at US\$1,150 per metric ton.

Send us your tips to [marketintel@pnatuna.com](mailto:marketintel@pnatuna.com).

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## INFLUENCERS REPORT

### Majuro is West's busiest transshipment port

The week of February 9 in Majuro was another busy one for tuna transshipment by purse seiners off-loading their catches. Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) officials confirmed that six purse seiners — four in the 1,500-ton range, two at about 1,000 tons — were engaged in transshipment to carrier vessels in Port Majuro.

With tuna schools reported to be centered in the northern Kiribati 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that borders the Marshall Islands' EEZ, purse seiners in large numbers have been using Majuro as a transshipment hub. Majuro's proximity to the fishing grounds has turned it into the Western Pacific's busiest transshipment port, according to fisheries officials.

The six purse seiners off-loading were four Marshall Islands' flagged Koo's Fishing Company and two vessels associated with the Pan Pacific Foods tuna loining plant in Majuro.

In addition to the six vessels actively off-loading, 11 other seiners — two US, one Tuvalu and eight Taiwan flagged — were in port refueling, re-provisioning and taking on new crew before returning to fish.

One Taiwan-flagged purse seiner, however, is currently being held in Majuro by court order. MIMRA attorney Tion Nabau filed four fishing without a license and five interference with a Fisheries Observer performing his duties charges in the High Court. The vessel faces a maximum fine of \$6.5 million if found guilty on all charges. A hearing is scheduled in court later in February.

### Tuvalu to review FADs issue

Tuvalu wants to seriously look at imposing an extra fee on distant water fishing nations for the use of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) in its waters to address disproportionate burden.

Fisheries officials have raised concerns that the ban of FADs will create a disproportionate burden for Tuvalu. Fisheries officials estimate that they could be losing \$54,000 per day for the duration of the bans.

Caretaker Minister of Fisheries Elisala Pita said as the fishing grounds are small and dispersed distant water fishing nations needed FADS to congregate fish in Tuvalu waters: "The FAD closure will discourage distant fishing nations from buying fishing days in Tuvalu because they can't use FADs therefore Tuvalu could lose millions of dollars it could get from fishing days. And these fishing vessels could flee to fish in waters of other countries who failed to impose the FADs closure."

Fishery Director Sam Finikaso says Tuvalu, despite its strongly objections to the ban, imposed the four months ban on FADs. Mr Finikaso believes Distant Water Fishing Nations could always bear a FADs fishing day fee if the average catch allowed for any fishing vessel is 30 to 40 tons per day at \$1800 per ton, which would come to \$54,000 per day.

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## Yellow card blues hit Tuvalu

Tuvalu has six months to respond to yellow card status imposed by the European Commission. Caretaker Minister of Fisheries – Elisala Pita says the EU Directorate General for Fisheries and Marine Affairs (DG MARE) carried out an inspection of Tuvalu's fisheries management arrangements in February 2014: "Based on the inspection they concluded that some of our fishery management arrangements are inadequate to tackle Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing taking place in Tuvalu waters or by Tuvalu-flagged vessels."

The European Commission decided on January 12 2014 that Tuvalu be notified that it could be identified by the Commission as a non-cooperating third country in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Hon Pita reiterates that "despite our frustrations over EC's decision, we have to consider it properly in the long term. The 'yellow card' is just a warning - we have six months to submit the Action Plan mentioned above and if endorsed by the Commission, the yellow card status will be lifted."

Tuvalu will now have to come up with an Action Plan to address the issues identified by the DG MARE inspectors.

## PNG loses K65m a year, EU says

As Papua New Guinea tries to avoid the EU's yellow card, an EU report stated the country loses approximately K65million annually due to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in their waters.

EU Ambassador to PNG Martin Dihm said: "We (EU) have strict regulations in Europe that any fish that's imported into our Union is traceable...that we know that it has been fished under sustainable circumstances."

Responding to questions posed by the *National* newspaper on the yellow card, Head of Corporation Elisabeth Gotschi said: "Many rural coastal communities in Papua New Guinea depend on subsistence fisheries. At the national level you (PNG)

do have laws that ensures that nobody steals your fish, and profits from it without your communities and government benefiting at all."

## Palau Tuna study proves tuna migrates

As the debate on a proposed marine reserve for most of Palau waters studies trickle that back up the science that support the argument for conservation. A study conducted by the National Geographic Pristine Seas shows that tuna and other open ocean fish do not move as much as people once thought.

The National Geographic surveys included the first fisheries-independent description of the open ocean fishes around Palau, and the first survey of the deep sea down to 3,500 meters.

"We found a diverse fish fauna in the open and deep ocean around Palau, including numerous sharks and schools of tunas," said Chief Scientist of National Geographic Pristine Seas, Dr. Alan Friedlander in a letter to Palau Senator Hokkons Baules, author of the proposed Palau Natonal Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) legislation.

Friedlander and the other researchers of the National Geographic, including the CEO of the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), endorsed the creation of a sanctuary, which they said " would provide these fish with protection allowing them to grow larger, become more abundant, and reproduce more. This would benefit the fishing grounds within and around Palau."

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