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Vanuatu 2013 Annual Report

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
GOVERNMENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU



FISHERIES DEPARTMENT
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2013 Report to the SPRFMO Science Working Group

1 October 2013

1. Description of Fishery

Vanuatu flagged vessels commenced operations in the jack mackerel fishery in 2003. The number of vessels operating each year is shown in Table 1. The vessels are all 'sister ships' of 105 metres in length with a GRT of 7,805.

Table 1: Number of Vanuatu vessels operating in the Pacific jack mackerel fishery by year

Year	Number of vessels
2003	4
2004	4
2005	4
2006	6
2007	4
2008	4
2009	4
2010	4
2011	2
2012	2

The vessels have a frozen storage capacity of around 3,500 tonnes of product in cartons. The vessels are periodically offloaded to reefer vessels that transport their catch to West African markets. The fishing vessels receive provisions, packaging, fuel and spare parts from the reefer vessels and are, as a result, able to stay on the fishing grounds for the entire season.

2. Catches and Fishing Effort

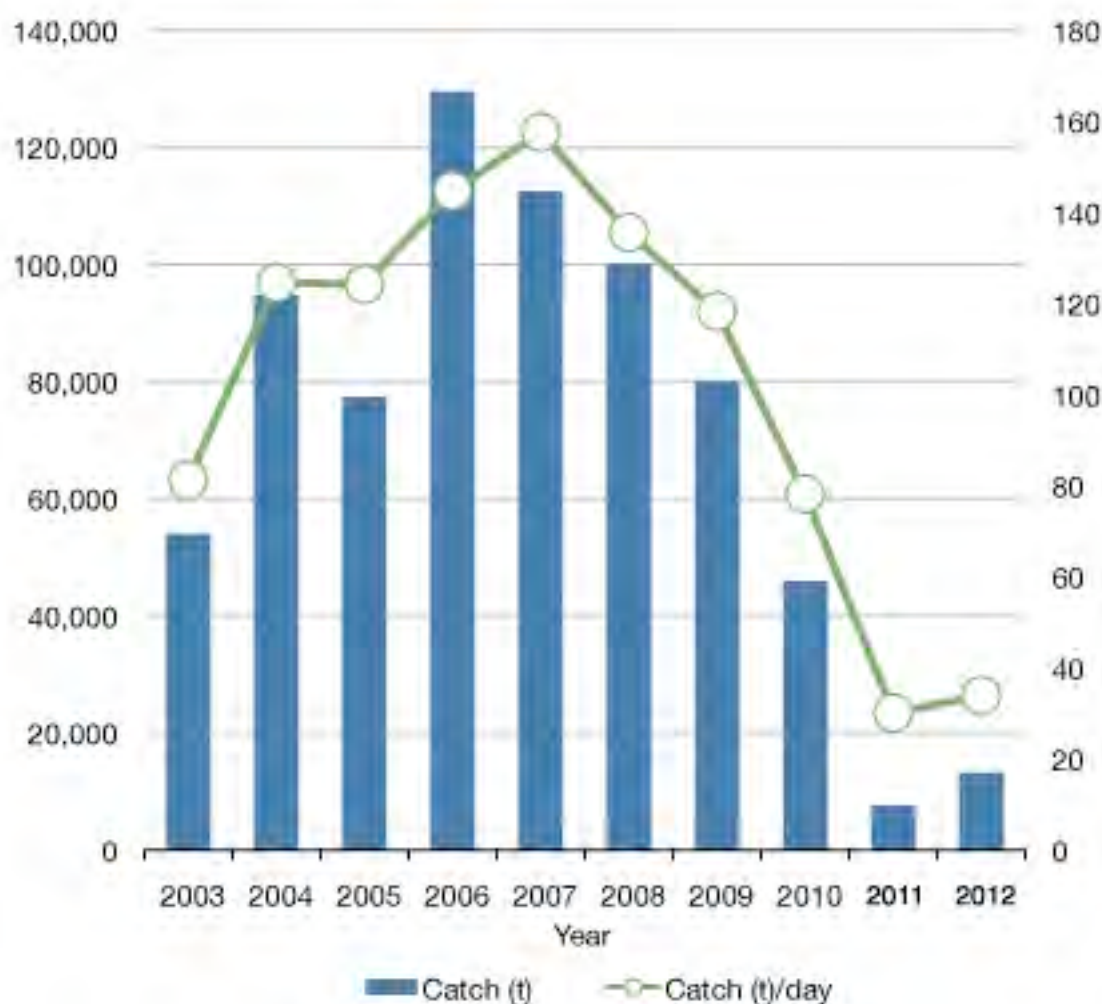
Table 2: Average Catch Rates

Year	Fishing days ¹	'Other' days ²	Catch (t) ³	Catch (t)/fishing day
2003	664	223	53,959	81.3
2004	760	415	94,685	124.6
2005	623	147	77,356	124.2
2006	895	267	129,535	144.7
2007	714	254	112,501	157.6
2008	738	223	100,066	135.6
2009	676	136	79,942	118.3
2010	587	85	45,908	78.2
2011	253	38	7,617	30.1
2012	476	41	16,068	33.8

1. 'Fishing days' includes days spent searching and fishing.
2. 'Other days' includes days spent transshipping, transiting to and from the fishery, bunkering and in port.
3. Catches of jack mackerel only.

The two Vanuatu vessels fished from mid March through to mid October. The total catch in 2012 was less than 29% of Vanuatu's 2010 catch.

Figure 1: Total jack mackerel catches and catch rates, 2003 -2011

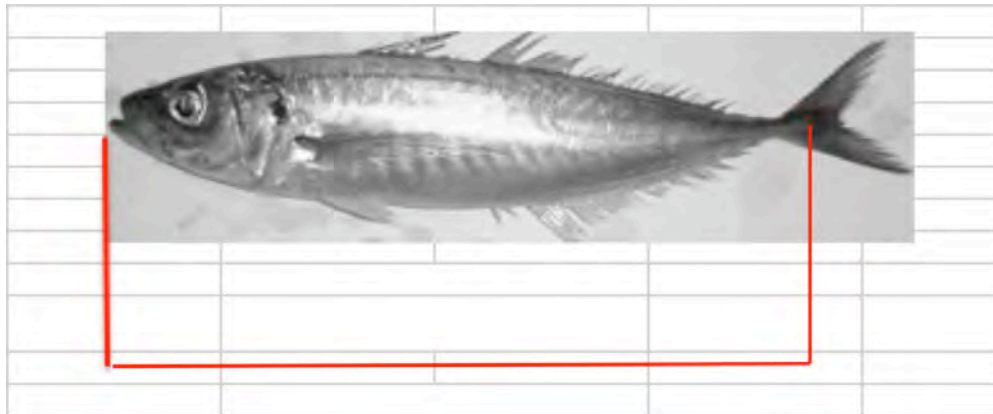


3. Fisheries data collection and research activities

Four types of data are available from the fishery; haul by haul logsheet data filled in by the captains; VMS data on vessel positions; size composition of the jack mackerel catches which is collected by each vessel's processing factory manager; and observer data.

The size composition data is collected for commercial purposes, with the fish size categories and method of fish measurement reflecting sales and marketing requirements rather than scientific needs. However as the data have been collected consistently since 2003, trends in catches of different size classes of fish are clearly evident.

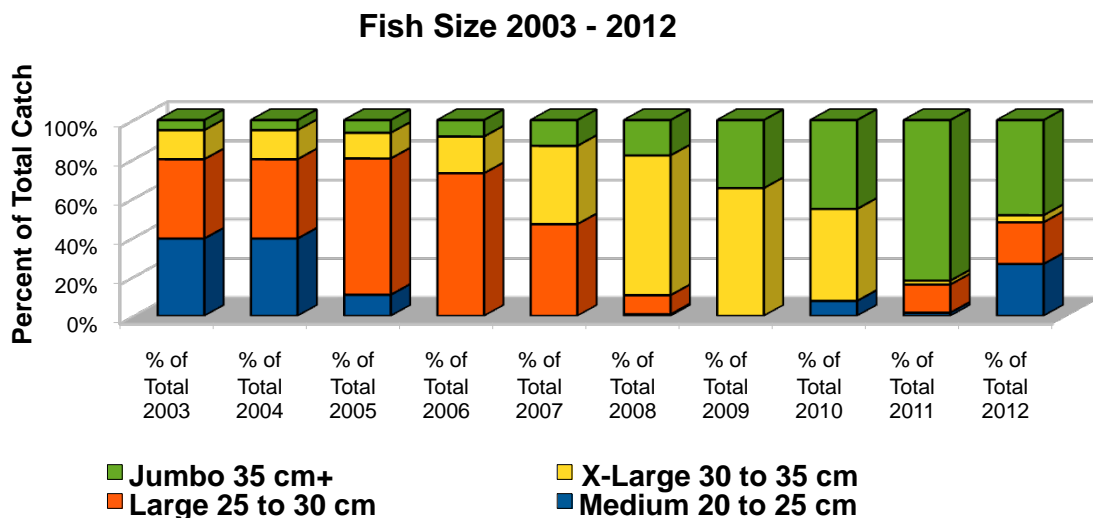
The commercial measurement of the jack mackerel is shown in the photo below.



The jack mackerel are sorted and recorded in four length classes:

Medium (M)	20-25cm
Large (L)	25-30cm
Extra large (XL)	30-35cm
Jumbo (J)	+35cm

The figure below illustrates the continued increase in average size of the jack mackerel in the catch. In 2012, although fish of length greater than 35cm continued to dominate catches, there was a substantial amount of “medium” grade fish, increasing from less than 2% percent in 2011 to over 26% of the total catch in 2012.



By-catches were comprised of chub mackerel. Catches of chub mackerel totalled 193 tonnes in 2012.

Observer data on the length frequencies of the catch were collected for 104 fishing days in the 2012 season out of a total 476 days fished, giving an observer coverage rate of 21.8%.