



Australian Government
Bureau of Rural Sciences

**Australian National Report to the South Pacific
Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
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Description of Fisheries

This report provides a summary of catch of Australian-registered vessels targeting various species with mid-water and demersal gear on the high seas in the indicative area of the proposed South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) (23.5°S to 60°S and 120°E to 180°E – the proposed SPRFMO area).

This summary excludes data from within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of mainland Australia and external territories (e.g. Macquarie Island or Norfolk Island).

Data presented are logbook records collected and reported by fishers in 2007 and 2008.

The vessels undertaking high seas fishing in South Pacific waters do so under permits issued by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA).

Fleet composition

A total of 4 Australian vessels fished in the area of the proposed SPRFMO in 2007 and 3 vessels in 2008. Vessels fished with either demersal trawl or line methods (demersal longline or dropline). Australian vessels have not been active in pelagic fisheries in the proposed SPRFMO area in either 2007 or 2008.

Area of operations

All fishing operations in both years were within the same areas that had been fished by Australian vessels during 2001 to 2006.

Catch, Effort and CPUE Summaries

The total catch of all species taken by Australian vessels in 2007 and 2008 was 480 tonnes. Orange roughy (*Hoplostethus atlanticus*), alfonsino (*Beryx splendens*) and redthroat emperor (*Lethrinus miniatus*) collectively comprised 63 per cent of the total catch (see Appendix A for the catch composition in 2007 and 2008). There was no catch of jack mackerel (*Trachurus*) species by Australian vessels operating in the proposed SPRFMO area in 2007 and 2008. No new changes (i.e., management, fishing practices) were recorded in the fishery.

The 2007 and 2008 catch, nominal effort and catch per unit effort (CPUE) cannot be reported due to AFMA confidentiality policy (<5 vessels operating). Tables 1 and 2 provide summaries for 1987 – 2006 for trawl and non-trawl.

Fisheries Data Collection and Research Activities

Australian vessels require a permit from AFMA to fish in the proposed SPRFMO area. These permits are issued for a period of up to 12 months. Satisfactory compliance with previous permit conditions is one factor in deciding whether to grant new fishing permits. From 2002, permit conditions have included the requirement to record catch and effort data in logbooks on a shot-by-shot basis, including position of fishing operations. These logbooks also require fishers to record discards and bycatch. All Australian flagged vessels fishing on the high seas are required to have vessel monitoring systems (VMS) to verify certain logbook information.

Australia collects detailed information on fishing trips through reporting requirements as part of permit conditions for bottom fishing in the high seas.

Logbooks

Catch and effort data continues to be collected by daily fishing logbooks for the Australian vessels operating in the proposed SPRFMO area. AFMA distributes, collects and processes these logbooks. Disposal of catch is monitored through catch disposal records. AFMA distributes, collects and processes these records.

Vessel Monitoring System

A vessel monitoring system (VMS) has been required in all Commonwealth managed fisheries since 1 July, 2007, including vessels fishing on the high seas.

Observer Program

The AFMA has recruited and trained observers since its establishment in 1992. Twenty two observers are currently employed in the AFMA observer program. They are sourced from universities and the maritime industries from around Australia and require the ability to live and work at sea, have demonstrated experience in collecting biological data at sea, and have experience in fisheries research methodologies and collection of associated scientific data. Observers also hold marine radio operators certificate of proficiency (or similar qualifications and/or experience), a sea safety certificate and medical certificate, and have completed an AFMA observer training course.

Biological Sampling and Length/Age Composition of Catches

Length-frequency data were collected by Australian observers in the proposed SPRFMO area in 2007 and 2008 but not in sufficient quantities to accurately estimate the size composition of target and by-product species.

Summary of Observer and Port Sampling Programs

Australia collects detailed information on fishing trips through reporting requirements as part of permit conditions for bottom fishing in the high seas. In addition, 100 per cent observer coverage is required on all vessels permitted to use demersal trawl gear and a minimum of 10 per cent observer coverage is required on vessels using other demersal fishing methods. The required levels of observer coverage were achieved in 2007 and 2008.

Table 1. Number of high seas vessels, effort and annual catch of major species using trawl gear in the reporting area 1987-2006. *Data for years marked are pooled in order to comply with AFMA's confidentiality policy (<5 vessels). **Data for years marked, 2007 and 2008 catch, nominal effort and CPUE cannot be reported due to AFMA's confidentiality policy (<5 vessels).

Year	No. Vessels	Effort (Trawl h)	Catch of major species (t) (nominal CPUE t/trawl h)					Total Catch (t)	
			Orange roughy	Smooth oreo	Spikey oreo	Alfonsino	Cardinal- fishes		Other species
1987 – 1990*	6	105	9 (0.08)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8	17
1991 – 1993*	6	85	367 (4.31)	1 (0.01)	107 (1.26)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4	479
1994	7	257	192 (0.74)	0 (0)	6 (0.02)	0 (0)	2 (0)	3	203
1995 – 1996*	6	62	21 (0.34)	12 (0.19)	10 (0.16)	0 (0)	52 (0.84)	2	98
1997	10	396	1458 (3.68)	505 (1.27)	448 (1.13)	1 (0)	15 (0.03)	41	2468
1998	12	916	3098 (3.38)	420 (0.46)	620 (0.68)	1 (0)	2 (0)	3	4143
1999	10	777	2514 (3.23)	106 (0.137)	89 (0.11)	8 (0.01)	1(0)	4	2720
2000	12	752	948 (1.26)	123 (0.16)	86 (0.11)	4 (0)	7 (0)	1	1170
2001	9	307	751(2.45)	13 (0.04)	31 (0.10)	1 (0)	0 (0)	3	799
2002	14	215	383 (1.79)	4 (0.02)	35 (0.16)	3 (0.01)	0 (0)	5	429
2003	10	115	156 (1.36)	3 (0.03)	32 (0.28)	2 (0.02)	0 (0)	5	198
2004	10	69	351 (5.08)	16 (0.23)	9 (0.13)	1 (0.01)	0 (0)	2	381
2005	7	47	207 (4.40)	74 (1.57)	1 (0.02)	81 (1.72)	0 (0)	17	380
2006	7	121	166 (1.37)	0 (0)	0 (0)	209 (1.73)	0 (0)	77	452
2007**									
2008**									
Total		4224	10 620	1277	1475	311	78	175	13 935

Table 2. Number of high seas vessels and annual catch of major species using non-trawl gear in the reporting area 1997-2006. *Data for years marked are pooled in order to comply with AFMA's confidentiality policy (<5 vessels). **Data for years marked, 2007 and 2008 catch, nominal effort and CPUE cannot be reported due to AFMA's confidentiality policy (<5 vessels).

Year	No. Vessels	Catch of major species (t)					Total catch (t)
		Morwong	Blue eye trevalla	Ocean blue eye trevalla	Yellowtail kingfish	Other spp.	
1997 – 1998*	5	31	32	0	15	36	114
1999	5	29	22	0	13	20	85
2000 – 2001*	5	121	27	35	19	72	274
2002	6	81	27	66	32	39	244
2003	5	16	30	13	1	28	89
2004	6	0	2	7	0	9	19
2005 – 2006*	5	0	3	0	0	4	8
2007**							
2008**							
Total		279	144	121	80	209	833

Appendix A: Taxa caught in the SPRFMO area in 2007 and 2008

Common name	Taxonomic name
Alfonsino	<i>Beryx splendens</i>
Amberjack	<i>Seriola dumerili</i>
Bar rockcod	<i>Epinephelus ergastularius</i> & <i>E. septemfasciatus</i>
Bastard trumpeter	<i>Latridopsis forsteri</i>
Blackfin armour gurnard	<i>Satyrichthys cf moluccense</i>
Blackspot pigfish	<i>Bodianus vulpinus</i>
Blue eye trevalla	<i>Hyperoglyphe antarctica</i>
Blue Maori cod	<i>Epinephelus cyanopodus</i>
Blue morwong	<i>Nemadactylus valenciennesi</i>
Bramble shark	<i>Echinorhinus brucus</i>
Cardinalfishes unspecified	Apogonidae & Dinolestidae - undifferentiated
Conger eels unspecified	Congridae - undifferentiated
Coral perch	<i>Trachyscorpia</i> spp.
Coral trout	<i>Plectropomus</i> & <i>Variola</i> spp.
Cuttlefish	Sepiidae - undifferentiated
Finfish unspecified	
Gemfish	<i>Rexea solandri</i>
Goldspot pigfish	<i>Bodianus perditio</i>
Green jobfish	<i>Aprion virescens</i>
Hapuku	<i>Polyprion oxygeneios</i>
Hapuku & bass groper	<i>Polyprion americanus</i> & <i>P. oxygeneios</i>
Hussar	<i>Lutjanus adetii</i>
King snapper	<i>Pristipomoides filamentosus</i>
Jackass morwong	<i>Nemadactylus macropterus</i>
Longfin rockcod	<i>Epinephelus quoyanus</i>
Maori cod	<i>Epinephelus undulatostratus</i>
Morwongs unspecified	<i>Nemadactylus</i> spp
Orange roughy	<i>Hoplostethus atlanticus</i>
Pelagic armourhead	<i>Pseudopentaceros richardsoni</i>
Reef ocean perch	<i>Helicolenus percoides</i>
Redthroat emperor	<i>Lethrinus miniatus</i>
Ribaldo	<i>Mora moro</i>
Robinson's bream	<i>Gymnocranius grandoculis</i>
Rockcods	<i>Aethaloperca</i> & <i>Anyperodon</i> spp.
Roughskin dogfishes	<i>Centroscymnus</i> & <i>Deania</i> spp.
Ruby snapper	<i>Etelis carbunculus</i>
Samson fish	<i>Seriola hippos</i>
Sea breams unspecified	<i>Gymnocranius</i> spp.
Sea perches unspecified	<i>Lutjanus</i> spp.
Sea perches & snappers unspecified	Caesionidae & Lutjanidae – undifferentiated
Sharks unspecified	
Shortfin mako shark	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>
Silver trevally	<i>Pseudocaranx dentex</i>
Skates unspecified	Rajidae – undifferentiated
Spikey oreodory	<i>Neocyttus rhomboidalis</i>
Stargazers unspecified	Uranoscopidae - undifferentiated
Whiptails unspecified	Macrouridae - undifferentiated
White warehou	<i>Seriolella caerulea</i>
Yellowtail kingfish	<i>Seriola lalandi</i>