

**Talking points on purse seine capacity issue
(Submitted by Japan)**

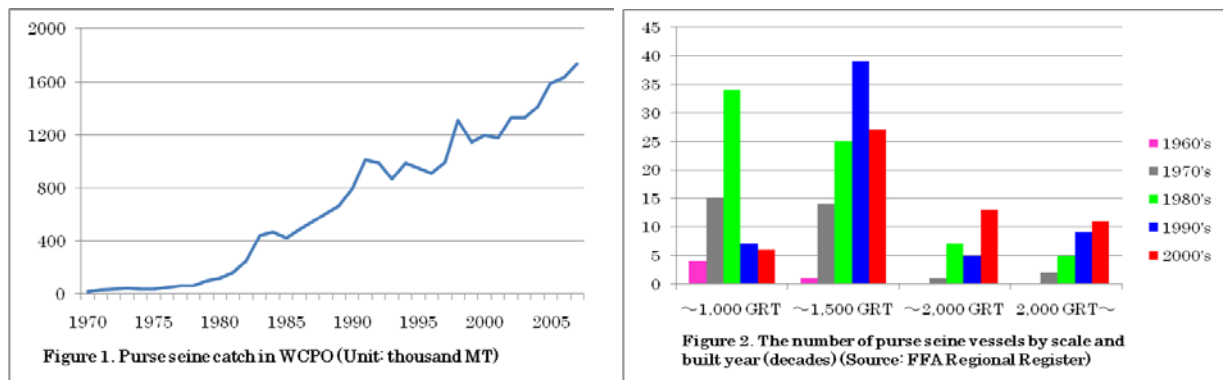
1. Purse seine fishery in the WCPFC area

Purse seine catch in the WCPFC area has been expanding drastically for the last 30 years; reported catch was only 120 thousand MT in 1980, then, in 1991, the catch reached 1 million MT. In 2007, it harvested 1.74 million MT, which accounted for 65% of the global purse seine catch. (Table1 and Figure 1)

WCPFC	IATTC	ICCAT	IOTC	CCSBT	Total
1,743	465	176	275	6	2,665

Table1. Global catch of tunas and skipjack by purse seiner in 2007 (Unit: thousand MT)

Both the number of the purse seine fishing vessels and its capacity have been increasing. The number of vessels registered in the FFA Regional Register has increased by 26 from 205 in 2003 to 231 in 2010. During the period, 30 vessels have been constructed with more advanced equipments; most them are over 1,500 GRT. This means the overall harvesting capacity as well as average per-vessel capacity have increased. (Figure. 2)



2. Stock status of main species in the WCPFC area: bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack

Main species caught by the purse seine fishery are skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye. Bigeye stock is estimated at a level below the MSY, while yellowfin around at the MSY. Upon recommendations of the Scientific Committee, WCPFC adopted the conservation and management measure (CMM 2008-01) at its annual meeting in 2008, which aims to reduce fishing mortality of bigeye tuna by 30% and prevent fishing mortality increase for yellowfin. Since it was recognized that CMM 2008-01 cannot achieve its management objective, WCPFC will likely to introduce further measures this year based on new stock assessment results to be conducted this August.

Regarding skipjack, although last assessment result was optimistic, concern was expressed by Japanese scientists that skipjack migration to Japanese coast, the margin of a migration, has significantly decreased at least for the last three years and

Japanese coastal fishermen have suffered from poor catch. A new stock assessment will be conducted this year, incorporating such Japanese data.

3. Discussion

While the over-capacity of purse seine fleets has been globally recognized, the issue in the WCPFC area is the most significant in scale; 30 newly constructed vessels have joined fishing during the last 7 years. Once a purse sine vessel is constructed, it has to keep operating for more than 20 years to recover the investment. In addition, some fishing capacity in other oceans has gradually shifted to the WCPFC area, and such move has further accelerated over-capacity in this area.

Should the over-capacity issue in the WCPFC area not be addressed properly, such excessive capacity may well have reversible impact for other oceans. Therefore, capacity reduction in WCPFC is urgently required.

On the other hand, due consideration should be given to the following points:

- (1) In the WCPFC area, most of the purse seine fishing grounds are formed in EEZs of the Small Island Developing States (SIDs); and
- (2) SIDs have legitimate rights for fisheries development, since fishery is a primary source of income for them.

4. Proposal

It is essential to establish a capacity control mechanism, which allows enough room for developing states, in particular SIDs, to accommodate their fishery development aspiration. As a first step, Japan proposes the following measures:

- (1) The following 7 Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFNs) will, by the end of 2013, reduce their purse sine vessels operating in the WCPFC area by 20% or, if appropriate, equivalent capacity in the area:
China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, US, EU, and Philippines (Distant-water fleet)
- (2) The DWFNs will take necessary measures to ensure that no aforementioned reduced vessels or capacity will be transferred to other oceans for fishing operation.