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**Review of Chinese tuna data collection and processing system
in the eastern Pacific Ocean**

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Introduction

Since 1999, China tuna longline fleet have begun to operate in the high seas of Eastern Pacific Ocean(EPO) targeting on bigeye tuna, with the total catch about 400 MT. In 2000, China tuna catch in the EPO was also about 400 MT. Since 2001, China tuna fishery in the EPO included longline fishing and small-scale purse seine fishing and the catch from two gears amounted 5890 MT(LL) and 2200 MT(PS) respectively. Since 2002, the purse seine fishery withdrawn from EPO and the total catch of tuna and tuna-like species was 12493 MT. The total catch of tuna and tuna-like species reduced to 8817 MT in 2003. The Chinese vessels operated in the EPO belong to large-scale vessels(over 24 m in length).

China Tuna Data Collection System

Since 1999, China Tuna Research Working Group (The Group) has been established in Shanghai Fisheries University under the support of Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture. China Tuna Research Working Group began to design tuna data form (a kind of logbook) and revise historical tuna fishery data. The Group guides the tuna fishery company to fill logbook data.

The form included fishing effort and catch(weight and number) by species by position. Generally, the tuna fishing effort and catch are recorded by everyday and are aggregated in ten days or less. If there are great change of fishing position in ten days, the aggregated data record shall include more than one item. The Group undertook to compile Task I (catch and fishing effort) data and Task II data (catch and fishing effort data by month, by species and by areas) as well as fishing vessel information. The logsheet data from longline vessels are submitted to China Distant Fisheries Association by their fishing companies with the 100% coverage rate.

China began to dispatch an observer on board in the Atlantic ocean in 2001 and sent observer to the EPO in 2003. The observer data shall provide accurate fishing gear, length frequency etc. information. The observer reports have been submitted to international tuna organizations.

In order to obtain more detailed longline fishery information, the Group begins to carry out detailed logbook program under the support of Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture since 2004. The detailed logbook shall include individual weight and number of major tuna species and even some bycatch species. Primarily the coverage of logbook is set about 10% of total large-scale tuna longliners.

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