
**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSION
FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN
AND CENTRAL PACIFIC**

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**CHINESE TAIPEI RESPONSE TO JAPANESE PAPER ON THE ESTIMATE ON
IMPACT AS A RESULT OF INCREASE IN FISHING EFFORT BY SUPER PURSE-
SEINERS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC**

(Submitted by the delegation of Chinese Taipei)

We appreciate the efforts made by the distinguished delegates of Japan in providing this information background paper for the conference. However, I may say many of the figures need further rectification and whether the theory used is justifiable need further debate among the delegates

I am disappointed to see such information as “31-33 net increase of new purse seiners” and “...the newly constructed purse-seiners, 5 are over than 2,000 GT and additional 5 constructed purse-seiners are reportedly over than 2,000 GT”, is in fact provided by an information orientated party like Japan. As a matter of fact, presently there are 26 foreign registered purse seiners which may be related to our citizens. All of them have registered in FFA, including 5 purse seiners over 2,000 GT (so-called super purse seiners) were built in Taiwan operating in the WCP region and there is an additional one under construction. Of the 26 foreign registered purse seiners some of them are in fact boats over 10 years of age. Their engines, including the one super purse seiner under construction, are all manufactured in Japan. In other words, if Japan did not provide engines, these 27 vessels would not have been built in Taiwan.

Chairman, let me inform the conference that after returning home from PrepCon IV, I have a serious talk with the vessels investors and the shipbuilders, pointing out that continued increase in the number of purse seiners would undermine the sustainability of tuna resources. Moreover, the number of purse seine vessels under the registration of FFA was close to its ceiling of 205, and any further increase would have the risk of being rejected from registration. The industries representatives have responded positively to my request, and it is my understanding that to-date there is no order for building of new purse seiners. If Japan does not continue exporting main engines to Taiwan, no further foreign flagged purse seiners will be built in Taiwan for fishing in the region.

In his paper, our Japanese friend mentioned that “... the purse-seiners of 2000 GT or over have increased from 0 in 1996 to 12 in 2003”. I am sure FFA who maintains the registry for foreign vessels in the region should be in a better position to respond to this. According to our information, up to May 2003, 13 vessels over 2000 GT are registered in FFA. Only 3 of them may have been operated by Taiwan citizens. The assumption that these 3 vessels operated by Taiwan citizen in the WCPO would bring threat to the tuna stocks and the viability of the industry is not justifiable, and one should not be alarmed by the possible competition of these small number of super purse seiners in the area.

For your information, I am providing the conference with a report from FAO together with a table as attached. The table shows that up to the year 2000, there were 43 purse seiners larger than 2000 GT in the world, accounting for 7.54 % of the total 570 purse seiners and 18.21% of total tonnage. In other words, super purse seiners are not something new innovated from Taiwan. According to FAO's report, most purse seiners are between 800 and 1200 GT and the number is 255, accounting for 44.74% of total vessels and 44.44% of total GRT in the world. This group seems to be the most optimal vessel tonnage. The existence of so-called super purse seiners in the past did not bring any threat to the global tuna stocks. Furthermore, by assuming that 205 vessels under the FFA registry will eventually be all super purse seiners is rather absurd.

Everyone agrees that price of any commodity fluctuates in accordance with its supply and demand, and tuna is no exception. My experience and common sense tell me that the supply of tuna has to be looked at in a global level rather than confined to western and central Pacific only, especially when tuna is such an important fishery commodity in international trade. Therefore, it seems that market of commodity is hard to be plotted by a simple statistical model basing only on the data of WCPFC, as indicated in Japan's background paper.

Let us not lose our focus by looking at the Japanese background paper. We should focus on resources conservation rather than market and commercial competitiveness. I must reiterate that it is not the policy of our government to encourage operation of foreign flagged fishing vessels. I would also like to take the opportunity to clarify that we will maintain only 41 purse seiners under our registration. In addition, without jeopardizing the existing interests of licensed vessels in the region, Chinese Taipei is willing to be more open-minded in cooperating with participants around the table working out a resolution, including freezing the number of fishing vessels at the current level, and providing joint efforts in assisting the flag island States to improve the management of their vessels. Such efforts require collaboration all parties around this table, particularly commitment from engine manufacturers to refrain from supplying engines for building additional new vessels.

Table Estimates for the year 2000 of the numbers and carrying capacities of the world's high-seas tuna purse seine fleet, by 400 ton intervals.

Range		ATL	IND	EPO	WPO	Total
<401 (mt)	Vessel #	1	0	52	23	75
	Capacity (mt)	400	0	11 274	6 215	17 889
401-800 (mt)	Vessel #	35	1	31	38	105
	Capacity (mt)	26 265	744	19 802	21 909	68 720
801-1 200 (mt)	Vessel #	10	15	74	156	255
	Capacity (mt)	11 467	16 213	72 867	162 833	263 380
1 201-1600 (mt)	Vessel #	6	9	33	24	72
	Capacity (mt)	8 030	13 204	44 745	33 033	99 012
1 601-2000 (mt)	Vessel #	1	9	6	4	20
	Capacity (mt)	1 902	16 343	10 699	6 909	35 653
>2000 (mt)	Vessel #	0	33	9	1	43
	Capacity (mt)	0	80 050	25 558	2 234	107 842
TOTAL	Vessel #	53	67	204	246	570
	Capacity (mt)	48 064	126 554	184 945	233 133	592 696

(Abstract from 'Managing Fishing Capacity of the World Tuna Fleet', FAO Fisheries Circular No. 982, 2003)

Figure The numbers and percentage of the purse seiner by 400 tones intervals in WCPO in May 2003.

