

Tuna: The Pacific's Lifeline

The Pacific is at a crossroad. One path leads to sustainable and equitable fisheries, a healthy marine environment, stable and prosperous island communities. The other path leads to the collapse of the major tuna fishery and loss of livelihoods and food supply for the people of the Pacific.

The future of the Pacific Ocean and of everyone who lives from it, is at the mercy of unscrupulous foreign fishers and a growing global appetite for tuna. The Pacific is in the grip of unfair and unsustainable fishing. Bigeye and yellowfin are subject to overfishing. Scientists warn these species are in serious trouble.

But there are achievable solutions that will bring about sustainable fishing by:

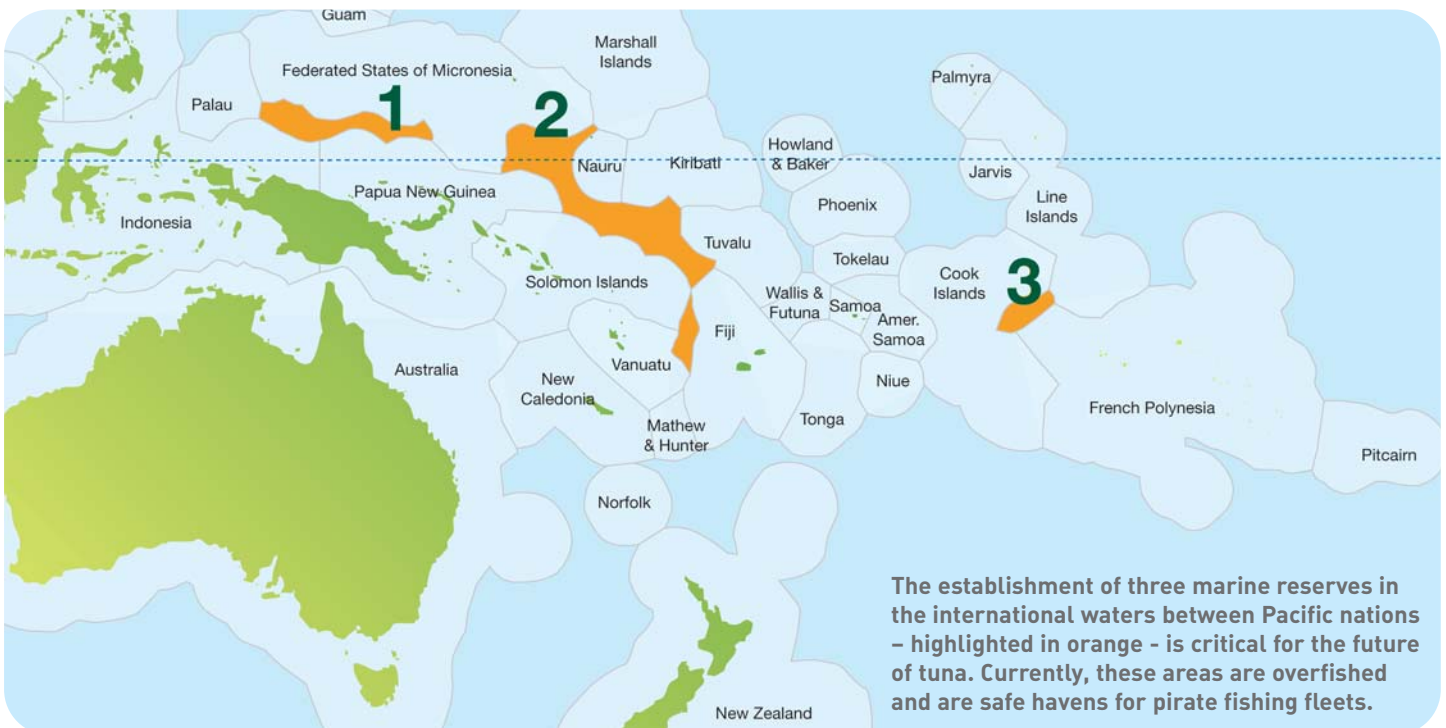
- an immediate cut to fishing by 50%
- creating three tabu areas in the international waters that are sandwiched between Pacific Island nations which will become three marine reserves – the first ever in international waters (see map below)
- increasing local jobs and income by ensuring access agreements are fair and sustainable and shifting to domestic small scale harvesting
- closing pirate fishing loopholes and banning all transfers of fish and refuelling at sea
- negotiating all fisheries management agreements in a unified block to maximise trading power

Marine reserves – tabu ocean zones

Marine reserves benefit sea life by protecting breeding areas, ocean habitats and fish that have been targeted by unsustainable fishing.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SAVE OUR TUNA:

- 1) Urge your government to support closing the three areas of international waters as tabu marine reserves that will restore the health and protect future tuna fisheries and breeding areas.
- 2) Meet or write to your Pacific Government leaders and officials encouraging 50% cut in tuna fishing in their waters
- 3) Visit www.greenpeace.org.au/marine-reserves to help protect the Pacific.



The three proposed marine reserves above cover extensive areas that include biologically rich undersea mountains, migration routes of tuna species, habitat of endangered leatherback turtles and breeding areas of skipjack, albacore and bigeye tuna.



More than half the world's tuna is fished from the Pacific. 75% of the world's fisheries are exploited up to and beyond the point where they can be regarded as sustainable. Global fisheries expert Dr Daniel Pauly states that in the future people will be eating jellyfish, because that is all that will be left – unless we act now.

Pacific people have fished the ocean for thousands of years, managing traditional fishing grounds sustainably.

Today over 2 million tonnes of tuna are fished out of the Pacific each year. More than 90% of our tuna is caught by the fleets of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, the United States and the European Union.



Across the entire region tuna fisheries employ over 10,000 Pacific Islanders with between 21,000 and 31,000 Pacific Islanders employed directly or indirectly by tuna fishing. This can be increased with tighter foreign fishing restrictions and charging more for the tuna resource.

In Niue, a fleet of small aluminium boats and outrigger canoes caught an estimated 100 tonnes of the main tuna species for the whole of 2003 – a foreign super seiner would catch this much fish in just two days.

In their race to catch more fish, fleets from distant countries use ships with large-scale fishing technology such as purse seining and long-lining. Not only are these methods wasteful, but it means that most of the profits leave the Pacific. The tuna treasure of the Pacific is being stolen by foreign fishers. But it's not too late. The Pacific can be saved from empty nets if we all take action now.



'Pacific Island countries are slowly turning the tide in respect of the control of the region's lucrative tuna fisheries. It has taken them a long time, and there is still some way to go. The omen that the tide is turning is evident in the recognition by the powerful nations of the world whose fishing vessels have exploited the region's lucrative tuna resources that Pacific Island countries are strategically positioned to manage and conserve the world's last remaining healthy tuna stocks.'

Dr Transform Aqorau, Deputy Director-General Forum Fisheries Agency, 2007



On top of overfishing pressure, pirate fishing boats do not comply with any rules and further disadvantage the region. Here, Greenpeace exposed a pirate tuna vessel in Suva Harbour disguising its name so it can continue fishing illegally in Pacific waters.

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