

Falling tuna catches sends Filipino fishers further offshore

November 17 2015



New research reveals that Filipino tuna fishermen in General Santos City are fishing further offshore whilst facing declining individual catches.

There are eight [tuna](#) canneries in General Santos and Zamboanga Cities in Mindanao that require around 124,000 metric tons of tuna supply per year. To meet this demand fishermen now have to [fish](#) further offshore

as tuna supplies in Philippine waters have halved in recent years. This also results in a demand for alternative fishing grounds to deploy more FADs. That was the message of a recent paper published in *Marine Policy* by BESTTuna researcher Edison Macusi and colleagues.

From a high of 500,000 mt in the 1990s to about 325,000 mt in 2005, the annual catch of the Philippines was reduced to 229,000 MT of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tunas in 2014 (WCPFC, Philippines annual report). Purse seine fishers now fish between 70 to 1000 km from the harbour; tuna handline fishers now fish up between 90 and 1500 km from the shore. At the same time, the catches of purse seiners and handline vessels have decreased from 18 tons to 7 tons per set and from 1.7 to 1.5 tons per trip respectively over the past two decades.

The results are of concern for the domestic Filipino tuna fishing industry and explains to a large extent the increasing tendency for importing tuna for processing. To maintain a stable supply for the canneries, this may lead to an increased need for access agreements with neighbouring countries, particularly Indonesia and the Pacific Island Countries.

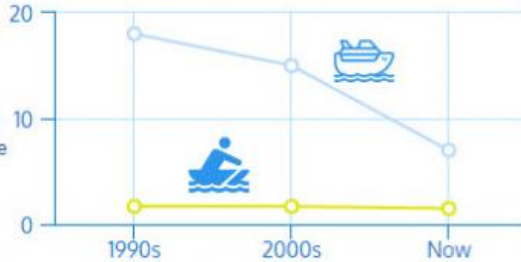
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Average tuna catch have decreased in the past two decades

 **7**
tons per set

 **1.5**
tons per fishing trip

Average catch (tons) per decade
The purse seine and ringnet fisheries have been catching less and less fish in the past two decades. The catch rate of the handline fishery remains the same but fishers roam much further offshore.



Alternative fishing grounds would be required for FAD deployments



Overall tuna supplies have halved

Pushing tuna fishers further offshore



Purse seine and ring net fishers now go from 70 to 1000 km offshore



Handliners now fish from 90 to 1500 km in search of tuna



More access right agreements with neighbors needed...



...to maintain stable supply of 124, 000 MT of tuna for the 8 canneries of Mindanao



To read more about the paper go to: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X15002511>

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Provided by Wageningen University

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