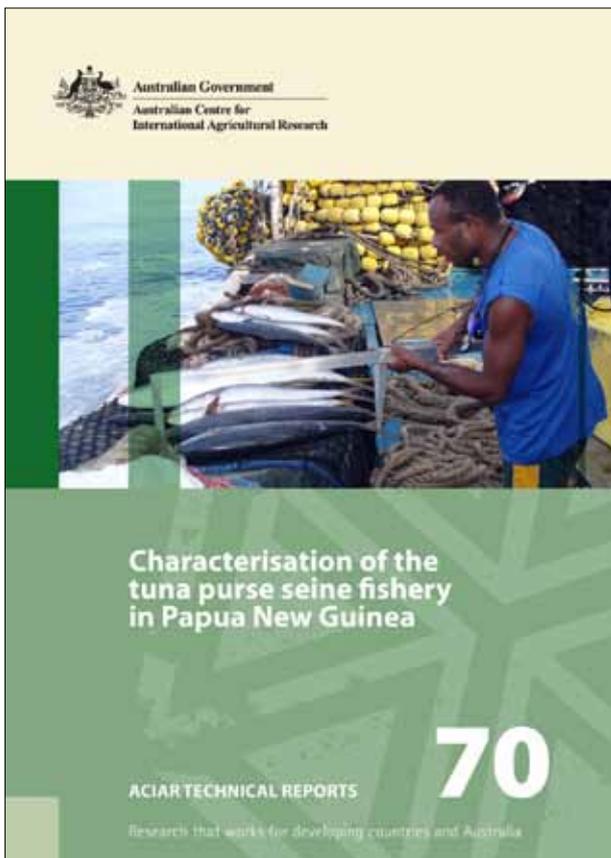




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Characterisation of the tuna purse seine fishery in Papua New Guinea



Nicol S., Lawson T., Briand K., Kirby D., Molony B., Bromhead D., Williams P., Schneiter E., Kumoru L. and Hampton J. 2009. Characterisation of the tuna purse seine fishery in Papua New Guinea. *ACIAR Technical Report No. 70*. Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research: Canberra. 44 pp.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) is pleased to announce the publication of *Characterisation of the tuna purse seine fishery in Papua New Guinea*.

Tuna fisheries in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) produce approximately half the world's tuna and are of high economic importance to Pacific island countries and territories. The purse seine fishery operating in Papua New Guinea (PNG) waters is one of the largest (20% of WCPO), catching mainly skipjack and yellowfin tuna, with a smaller catch of bigeye tuna and other non-target species. Information on the impacts of fishing on non-target species is becoming a priority at both national and international levels. There are increasing obligations towards minimising waste, reducing the risk of adverse effects on the marine environment, and ensuring the 'sustainability' of both target and non-target species populations. The National Fisheries Authority of PNG implements an observer program that offers the opportunity to document levels and variability of catches of non-target species in the tuna purse seine fishery.

This report is for fisheries managers, scientists and stakeholders who have an interest in tuna and the management of sustainable fisheries. It:

- summarises the purse seine fishery in PNG for the purpose of reviewing the operations and identifying any recent developments and trends
- provides estimates of time trends in catches and catch rates for a subset of non-target species or species groups
- qualitatively ranks the 'vulnerability' of all non-target species or species groups to the impacts of purse seine fishing.

The multiple lines of evidence presented will allow fisheries managers to undertake a preliminary assessment of the impact of the fishery on non-target species, and will assist in the development of appropriate management responses. The approach taken may be a useful tool for other studies that require characterisation of non-target species associated with fishing activities.

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