

CHAPTER FOUR

WORLD TUNA PRODUCTION

Efforts to fish for tuna seriously began only recently. With sizable modern fisheries being only developed after World War Two, the efforts to fish for tuna became intensified.

Although some tuna have been caught since antiquity and sizable modern fisheries developed in the eastern and western Pacific and in the eastern Atlantic between the two world wars, the greatest development in high-seas tuna fishing has taken place during the last 20 years.

During this period tuna fishing by longline below the surface and by purse-seine or bait-boat or both, at or near the surface has spread to nearly every part of every ocean, including all warmer seas where tunas occur.

4.1 QUANTITY HARVESTED

The world production of the principal market species of tunas has increased steadily over the past 50 years. Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 8 show the world production. During the last decade it has increased by about 6 % or 120,000 tons per year. In 1995 it is reported that more than 3.5 million tons have been caught.

4.2 OCEANS

Historically the largest percentage of tuna has been taken from the Pacific Ocean. Over the last few decades this percentage has varied from about 65% to 70% and in 1993 its share was 65%. The Atlantic Ocean historically has ranked second in total production, but in the mid-1980s was overtaken by the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean now supplies about 20% of the world catch, whereas the Atlantic has dropped from about 25% to around 15% in 1993.

TABLE 1**WORLD TUNA CATCHES BY PRINCIPAL SPECIES****1990 - 1994****(Thousand of Metric Tons - Live Weight)**

SPECIES	1991	1992	1993 1/	1994 2/
Skipjack (K. Pelamis)	1566.4	1427.3	1470.1	1554.5
Yellowfin (T. Albacares)	1015.9	1142.3	1140.7	1183.0
Bigeye (T. Obesus)	257.5	271.3	279.2	261.3
Longtail (T. Tonggol)	132.1	116.3	123.8	115.0
Bluefin (S/N) (T. Maccoyii / T. Thynnus)	43.9	47.2	52.4	62.9
TOTAL LIGHT MEAT	3015.8	3004.4	3066.2	3166.7
Albacore (T. Alalunga)	169.0	217.5	179.5	202.2
TOTAL TUNA	3184.8	3221.9	3245.7	3368.9

1/ Preliminary

2/ Preliminary with estimates

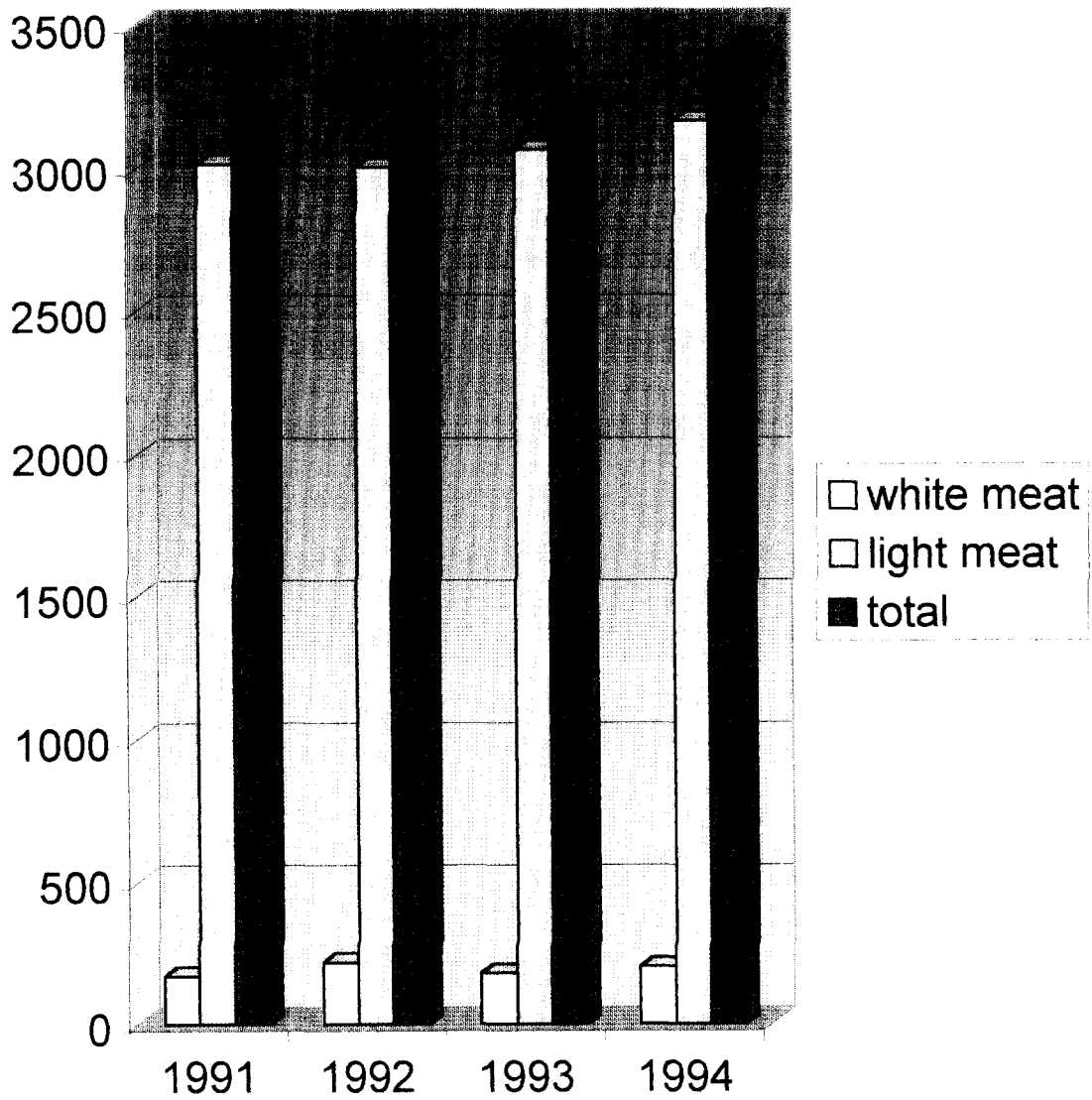
Sources : FAO and LMR, Inc.

TABLE 2				
WORLD TUNA CATCHES BY PRINCIPAL SPECIES AND OCEANS				
1991 - 1994				
(Thousand of Metric Tons - Live Weight)				
OCEAN/SPECIES	1991	1992	1993 1/	1994 2/
ATLANTIC OCEAN				
Yellowfin	159.4	150.3	139.0	141.4
Bigeye	71.4	73.0	86.2	84.7
Bluefin	28.8	30.3	33.1	39.7
Skipjack	195.1	147.6	168.3	169.5
TOTAL LIGHT MEAT	454.7	401.2	426.6	435.3
Albacore (T. Alalunga)	53.5	64.6	70.0	61.2
TOTAL TUNA	508.2	465.8	496.6	496.5
INDIAN OCEAN				
Yellowfin	189.9	269.1	297.6	275.0
Bigeye	42.0	37.6	45.1	46.3
Bluefin	7.3	4.8	4.0	4.1
Skipjack	223.7	281.5	271.8	295.0
Longtail	36.0	29.6	35.5	29.9
TOTAL LIGHT MEAT	498.9	622.6	654.0	650.3
Albacore (T. Alalunga)	38.8	17.8	10.6	10.7
TOTAL TUNA	534.7	640.4	664.6	661
PACIFIC OCEAN				
Yellowfin	666.6	722.9	704.1	766.6
Bigeye	144.1	160.7	147.9	130.3
Bluefin	7.8	12.1	15.3	19.1
Skipjack	1147.6	998.3	1030.2	1080.0
Longtail	96.1	86.7	88.3	85.1
TOTAL LIGHT MEAT	2062.2	1980.6	1985.6	2081.1
Albacore (T. Alalunga)	79.7	135.0	98.9	130.3
TOTAL TUNA	2141.9	2115.6	2084.5	2211.4
GRAND TOTAL				
Yellowfin	1015.9	1142.3	1140.7	1183.0
Bigeye	257.5	271.3	279.2	261.3
Bluefin	43.9	47.2	52.4	62.9
Skipjack	1566.4	1427.3	1470.1	1544.5
Longtail	132.1	116.3	123.8	115.0
TOTAL LIGHT MEAT	3015.8	3004.4	3066.2	3166.7
Albacore (T. Alalunga)	169.0	217.5	179.5	202.2
TOTAL TUNA	3184.8	3221.9	3245.7	3368.9
1/ Preliminary				
2/ Preliminary with estimates				
Sources : FAO and LMR, Inc.				

FIGURE 8

WORLD TUNA CATCHES 1991-1994

(Live Weight Basis)



Source : LMR Fisheries Research, Inc.

4.3 COUNTRIES

Japan continues to be the largest harvester of tuna. It caught a record high 767,000 MT in 1993, (Table 3) Japan's previous high was 753,200 MT in 1988. Taiwan is a distant second with about 376,000 MT in 1994.

In descending order of volume harvested, according to preliminary landings' data for 1994, are Japan, Taiwan, Spain, United States, South Korea, Indonesia, France, Philippines and Mexico. Thailand's production is almost entirely long-tail tuna (*Thunnus tonggol*) from the Indian Ocean.

TABLE 3**WORLD TUNA CATCHES BY COUNTRIES****1991 - 1994****(Thousand of Metric Tons - Live Weight)**

COUNTRIES	1991	1992	1993 1/	1994 2/
Japan	717.1	671.1	767.0	700.0
Taiwan	210.7	318.9	396.3	376.0
Spain	267.2	253.7	257.9	300.0
United States of America	235.6	261.9	221.3	253.9
Korea	266.5	224.6	166.9	241.9
Indonesia	211.1	242.5	223.9	237.0
France	166.6	169.0	176.0	193.5
Philippines	198.0	128.2	106.3	148.6
Mexico	129.0	131.8	119.5	121.2
Thailand	84.8	74.5	78.7	65.0
Others	698.2	745.7	718.8	731.8
TOTAL	3184.8	3221.9	3245.7	3368.9
1/ Preliminary				
2/ Preliminary with estimates				
Sources : FAO and LMR, Inc.				