



News Release

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Solomon Islands skipjack and yellowfin achieves MSC certification

The Solomon Islands skipjack and yellowfin tuna purse seine and pole and line fishery has achieved MSC certification. This certification recognizes that skipjack and yellowfin caught by the fishery come from well-managed stocks and that fishing practices meet the MSC's robust requirements for sustainability.

Tri Marine and its subsidiary National Fisheries Developments (NFD) led the effort to secure MSC certification in the Solomon Islands and will now be able to increase the supply of tuna eligible to be sold with the MSC label.

This MSC certification follows last month's announcement that Tri Marine had achieved MSC certification for free school skipjack and yellowfin tuna caught by American Samoan-based purse seine vessels in the Western and Central Pacific beyond the waters of the Partners to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) including US territorial waters, the waters of several other Forum Fisheries Agency member countries, and the high seas.

"This most recent certification provides well-deserved public recognition of the Solomon Islands' efforts to sustainably manage their purse seine and pole and line tuna fisheries and helps maximize the value of tuna caught and processed in the country." said **Matthew Owens, Tri Marine's Director of Environmental Policy.**

The newly MSC certified fishery operates in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) in the Main Group Archipelago (MGA) and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Solomon Islands. It represents around 25,000-30,000 metric tons of skipjack and yellowfin per year and is unloaded in Solomon Islands where it is processed almost entirely by SolTuna in Noro, Western Province.

SolTuna produces canned tuna, frozen cooked tuna loins, and fish meal and oil. SolTuna brands make up the vast majority of the canned tuna market in the Solomon Islands and are an important contributor to the country's food security. SolTuna also sells tuna products to customers in Europe and the Pacific region, where there is increased demand for MSC labelled tuna.

Locally managed, NFD and SolTuna employ over 2,000 Solomon Islanders and represent one of the country's largest private sector employers.

Environmentally sustainable fishing

Leaders of the Solomon Islands' fisheries expressed enthusiasm for the achievement of MSC certification and its value to the community, including **Permanent Secretary of Solomon Islands' Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Dr Christian Ramofafia** who said, *"The certification is a big achievement and a reflection of our efforts and commitment to ensure our fisheries are managed to agreed global standards for sustainability. We will continue to work together with all of our stakeholders to ensure the MSC certification of our fisheries is maintained into the future."*

Independent assessors and expert staff from [MRAG Americas](#) found that the fishery meets the MSC's requirements for healthy stocks, minimizing environmental impacts, and promoting good management. Stocks of both skipjack and yellowfin in the WCPO are healthy and projected to remain so.

Solomon Islands tuna fisheries are managed by overlapping national and regional regulations, including the Solomon Islands Tuna Management and Development Plan and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Vessel Day Scheme, which limit fishing effort. They are also managed within the framework set by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Eligible vessels carry observers to ensure that the fishery complies with legal and regulatory requirements as well as those of the MSC.

MSC certified tuna

“It is very positive to see more tuna fishing fleets in the Western Central Pacific achieving MSC certification,” said Jim Humphreys, Global Fisheries Coordinator at the Marine Stewardship Council. “This achievement demonstrates the investment that these fisheries are making in science, management and supply chains. They meet the world’s most credible standard for sustainable fishing which reflects international best practices.”

Around 842,000 metric tons of tuna caught in 2015 was MSC-certifiable – this represents 16 percent of total tuna catches. Demand for MSC certified tuna is particularly important in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Commitments to continued improvement

While the independent assessment team from MRAG Americas found that the Solomon Islands fishery meets the high standards set by the MSC, it has required five conditions of certification. In order to deliver these conditions, the fishery has put an action plan in place to demonstrate that harvest control rules are well-defined, responsive, and achieve management objectives. In addition, actions on recommendations from emerging research, monitoring and evaluation will be documented and available for stakeholders.

“International cooperation is required in order to safeguard tuna stocks for the future” said Humphreys. “We encourage fisheries, NGOs, retailers, and food service companies to work together to support effective management of tuna fisheries by regional fisheries management organizations, which will ensure long term sustainability.”

Supply chain traceability

To enable tuna from this fishery being sold with the blue MSC label, Tri Marine has recently completed its Group [MSC Chain of Custody](#) certification, ensuring the certified product is kept separate from non-certified tuna at all stages along the supply chain.

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About the Marine Stewardship Council

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is recognized as the world's leading certification program for sustainable, wild-caught seafood. In collaboration with fisheries scientists and marine experts, the MSC has developed two

global, science-based standards. The MSC Fishery Standard evaluates the sustainability of fisheries and the MSC Chain of Custody Standard ensures that any seafood carrying the blue MSC ecolabel is traceable to a certified fishery.

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About Tri Marine and National Fisheries Developments Ltd.

Tri Marine is a recognized leader in fishing, processing and distributing high-quality tuna products to the world's markets. The company focuses on quality, sustainability, innovation, and customer satisfaction. As a socially responsible operator, Tri Marine has chosen to invest and to become heavily involved in communities closest to the fisheries resources. Together with its workforce of over 5,000 employees, Tri Marine is committed to all of its customers, suppliers and stakeholders for the long-term. National Fisheries Developments LTD (NFD) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Tri Marine Group of Companies which owns a fleet of purse seine and pole and line tuna fishing vessels based in Western Province, Solomon Islands.

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