



# Distant Water Tuna Fleet 2023

Report to Congress

*August 15, 2024*



*U. S. Coast Guard*



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# Foreword

August 15, 2024

We are pleased to present the following report, “Distant Water Tuna Fleet 2023” (U.S. Purse Seine Fleet), which was prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (Pub. L. No. 109-241) directs the Coast Guard and the National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to submit an annual report to the Committees regarding landings of tuna, and capacity and trends of the fleet.

Pursuant to the Act, this report is provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources

If you require assistance regarding this report, please contact the Coast Guard’s Senate Liaison Office at (202) 224-2913 or House Liaison Office at (202) 225-4775.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Fagan  
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commandant

Janet Coit  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration



## Distant Water Tuna Fleet 2023

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# I. Legislative Language

This report responds to the requirement set forth in Section 421 of the *Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006*, 46 U.S.C. § 8103 note, Pub. L. No. 109-241, § 421, 120 Stat. 516, 548 (2006), as amended by the *Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010*, Pub. L. No. 111-281, § 904, 124 Stat. 2905, 3011 (2010); the *Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012*, Pub. L. No. 112-213, § 701, 126 Stat. 1540, 1579 (2012); the *Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014*, Pub. L. No. 113-281, § 601, 128 Stat. 3022, 3060-61 (2014); and the *Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2016*, Pub. L. No. 114-120, § 601, 130 Stat. 27, 79 (2015). The amended language states:

## **SEC. 421. DISTANT WATER TUNA FLEET.**

(a) **MANNING REQUIREMENTS.**-Notwithstanding section 8103(a) of title 46, United States Code, United States purse seine fishing vessels fishing exclusively for highly migratory species in the treaty area under a fishing license issued pursuant to the 1987 Treaty on Fisheries Between the Governments of Certain Pacific Islands States and the Government of the United States of America, or transiting to or from the treaty area exclusively for such purpose, may engage foreign citizens to meet the manning requirement (except for the master) until the date of expiration of this section if, after timely notice of a vacancy to meet the manning requirement, no United States citizen personnel are readily available to fill such vacancy.

(b) **LICENSING RESTRICTIONS.**-

(1) In general. -Subsection (a) only applies to a foreign citizen who holds a credential that is equivalent to the credential issued by the Coast Guard to a United States citizen for the position, with respect to requirements for experience, training, and other qualifications.

(2) Treatment of credential. -An equivalent credential under paragraph (I) shall be considered as meeting the requirements of section 8304 of title 46, United States Code, but only while a person holding the credential is in the service of the vessel to which this section applies.

(c) **EXPIRATION.** -This section expires on the date the Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America ceases to have effect of any party under article 12.6 or 12.7 of such treaty as in effect on the date of enactment of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012.

(d) **REPORTS.** -Not later than July 1 of each year until the date of expiration of this section, the Coast Guard and the National Marine Fisheries Service shall submit a report to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, providing the following information on the United States purse seine fleet referred to in subsection (a):

(1) The number and identity of vessels in the fleet using foreign citizens to meet manning requirements pursuant to this section and any marine casualties involving such vessels.

(2) The number of vessels in the fishery under United States flag as of January 1 of the year in which the report is submitted, the percentage ownership or control of such vessels by non-United States citizens, and the nationality of such ownership or control.

(3) Description of any transfers or sales of United States flag vessels in the previous calendar year, and the disposition of such vessel, including whether the vessel was scrapped or sold, and, if sold, the nationality of the new owner and location of any fishery to which the vessel will be transferred.

(4) Landings of tuna by vessels under flag in the 2 previous calendar years, including an assessment of landing trends, and a description of landing percentages and totals—

(A) delivered to American Samoa and any other port in a State or territory of the United States; and

(B) delivered to ports outside of a State or territory of the United States, including the identity of the port.

(5) An evaluation of capacity and trends in the purse seine fleet fishing in the area covered by the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Treaty, and any transfer of capacity from such fleet or area to other fisheries, including those governed under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention.

## II. Foreign Crew Employment and Reportable Marine Casualties in 2023

**Table 1:** Identity of vessels using foreign citizens to meet manning requirements, and reportable marine casualties involving U.S. flagged Western Pacific Ocean purse seine vessels (see notes at end of Table).

<b>VESSEL NAME<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>VESSEL ID NUMBER</b>	<b>FLAG STATE</b>	<b>USES FOREIGN CITIZENS FOR OFFICER MANNING<sup>3,4,5</sup></b>	<b>REPORTABLE MARINE CASUALTIES, 2023<sup>6</sup></b>
CAPE BRETON	1060977 (7803255)	US	Not Authorized	None
CAPE COD	599831 (7806283)	US	Not Authorized	None
CAPE ELIZABETH III	962922 (9018892)	US	Not Authorized	None
CAPE FERRAT	1074874 (7803267)	US	Not Authorized	None
CAPE FINISTERRE	610466 (7912094)	US	Not Authorized	None
CAPE MAY	645777 (8103028)	US	Not Authorized	None
CAPT VINCENT GANN	953794 (9018880)	US	Not Authorized	None
DANIELA	531005 (7107716)	US	Not Authorized	None

<sup>1</sup> There were no vessels sold or that became a re-entrant or new entrant during calendar year 2023. All vessels had a license to fish in the Treaty area.

<sup>2</sup> Section 601 of the Coast Guard Maritime and Transportation Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-281, § 601, 128 Stat. 3022, 3060 (2014), removed the requirement for each vessel to call on American Samoa or Guam in a calendar year.

<sup>3</sup> Officer manning on these vessels generally requires three licensed positions: (1) Master/Captain (must be a U.S. citizen); (2) Chief Mate/Mate/ Navigator/Deck Officer (titles vary per crew manifest); and (3) Chief Engineer/Engineer (may include additional credentialed officers if required to maintain specific engineering watches/duties).

<sup>4</sup> Crew manifests are required to be submitted to the Coast Guard only if a vessel enters or departs from a Captain of the Port Zone such as Guam or American Samoa.

<sup>5</sup> The Coast Guard published Policy Letter 13-04 (Dec 20, 2013), outlining eligibility for a manning exemption letter that would permit temporarily filling of a licensed position with a foreign citizen (excluding the master) on distant water tuna fleet vessels operating within South Pacific Tuna Treaty waters. Policy Letter 13-04 was replaced by Policy Letter 13-04-CH-01 (March 27, 2015) [https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/CG-5PC/CG-CVC/Policy%20Letters/2013/CG-CVC\\_pol13-04-CH-01.pdf](https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/CG-5PC/CG-CVC/Policy%20Letters/2013/CG-CVC_pol13-04-CH-01.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Information on Reportable Marine Casualties is generated from the Coast Guard's Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) database.

<b>VESSEL NAME<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>VESSEL ID NUMBER</b>	<b>FLAG STATE</b>	<b>USES FOREIGN CITIZENS FOR OFFICER MANNING<sup>3,4,5</sup></b>	<b>REPORTABLE MARINE CASUALTIES, 2023<sup>6</sup></b>
EVELINA DAROSA	965401 (8131441)	US	Not Authorized	None
FRIESLAND	1216624 (9310953)	US	Not Authorized	None
PACIFIC PRINCESS	600678 (7806271)	US	Not Authorized	None
SEA ENCOUNTER	604592 (7823360)	US	Not Authorized	None
WESTERN PACIFIC	564010 (7508893)	US	Authorized Expires Dec 2024	None

Table 1 Legend:

VESSEL NAME – The name under which the vessel is currently documented.

VESSEL ID NUMBER – The Coast Guard identification number. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) number is listed parenthetically.

USES FOREIGN CITIZENS FOR MANNING – Based on contact with the vessel, or vessel’s agent, owner, or owner’s representative.

REPORTABLE MARINE CASUALTY- 46 CFR § 4.03-1. In 2023 there were no reportable casualties.

### III. Percentages of Foreign Ownership or Control in 2023

**Table 2:** Percentage of foreign ownership or control of U.S. flagged western Pacific Ocean purse seine vessels.

<b>VESSEL NAME (ENDORSEMENT)</b>	<b>VESSEL ID NUMBER</b>	<b>FLAG STATE</b>	<b>FOREIGN OWNERSHIP/ CONTROL</b>	<b>NATIONALITY FOREIGN OWNER</b>
CAPE BRETON (Registry)	1060977 (7803255)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
CAPE COD (Registry/Fishery)	599831 (7806283)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
CAPE ELIZABETH III (Registry/Fishery)	962922 (9018892)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
CAPE FERRAT (Registry)	1074874 (7803267)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
CAPE FINISTERRE (Registry/Fishery)	610466 (7912094)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
CAPE MAY (Registry/Fishery)	645777 (8103028)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
CAPT VINCENT GANN (Registry/Fishery)	953794 (9018880)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
DANIELA (Registry/Fishery/Coastwise)	531005 (7107716)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
EVELINA DAROSA (Registry)	965401 (8131441)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
FRIESLAND (Registry)	1216624 (9310953)	US	50 % or Less	Unknown
PACIFIC PRINCESS (Registry)	600678 (7806271)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
SEA ENCOUNTER (Registry)	604592 (7823360)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown
WESTERN PACIFIC (Registry)	564010 (7508893)	US	25 % or Less	Unknown



Table 2 Legend:

VESSEL NAME – The name under which the vessel is currently or was documented prior to reflag status to another country.

ENDORSEMENT – The entry on the vessel’s Certificate of Documentation, which demonstrates the vessel is entitled to engage in a specified trade. A “Registry” endorsement entitles a vessel to employment in the foreign trade; trade with Guam, American Samoa, Wake, Midway, or Kingman Reef; and any other employment for which a coastwise, Great Lakes, or fishery endorsement is not required. Vessels subject to this report need only have a “Registry” endorsement to obtain a license to fish under the Treaty. A “Fishery” endorsement entitles a vessel to engage in fisheries as defined in 46 CFR § 67.3. Vessels foreign-built or rebuilt in a foreign shipyard are not eligible for a “Fishery” endorsement. A “Coastwise” endorsement entitles a vessel to employment in unrestricted coastwise trade and is generally reserved for vessels built in the United States or granted coastwise trading privileges by special legislation.

VESSEL ID NUMBER – The Coast Guard identification number. When available, the IMO number is listed parenthetically.

FLAG STATE - Reflects the country to which the vessel is registered. The above listed vessels that reflect “U.S.” as the country of registration are listed with the Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC). Vessels listed as both “U.S.” and another country are a result of the vessel being previously U.S. flagged, and then being re-flagged to another country at some point during the same year (vessel owner/sellers agent provides re-flag documentation to the NVDC).

PERCENTAGE FOREIGN OWNERSHIP/CONTROL and NATIONALITY OF FOREIGN OWNERSHIP –

Citizenship information for owner(s) of a vessel is provided on the application for vessel documentation forms to the U.S. Coast Guard. Records indicate vessels subject to this report are all owned by organizations, not individuals. In such cases, and when required, applicants need only certify U.S. citizen ownership and/or management control are above a certain percentage. For a registry (or recreational) endorsement, there is no regulatory requirement to indicate the percentage of stock/equity owned by U.S. citizens, unless the vessel is owned by a partnership or member managed Limited Liability Company (MBRLLC). If the vessel is owned by a partnership or MBRLLC, at least 50 percent of the equity in the partnership or MBRLLC must be owned by U.S. citizens to obtain a “Registry” endorsement (of the 13 vessels in this report: 7 are owned by a partnership, 4 are owned by a member managed LLC, and 2 are owned by corporations). The majority (7 of 13) of the vessels subject to this report carry only a “Registry” endorsement on their Certificate of Documentation. The above information has been provided by the U.S. Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center.

The information provided in Table 2 (above), regarding percentage of foreign ownership/control was extracted from the last approved “Application for Documentation,” Form CG-1258, with the U.S. Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center. The Coast Guard does not require information regarding nationality of any foreign ownership interest when applying for documentation. The Coast Guard has no information regarding the nationality of any non-U.S. stock or equity holders. No vessels within this report have applied for an exemption from the U.S. Citizen ownership and control requirements of the American Fisheries Act of 1998 in accordance with 46 U.S.C § 12113(c)(3) and the Maritime Administration’s implementing regulation at 46 C.F.R § 356.51(e)(2).

For any fishing vessel greater than 100 feet in length, the Maritime Administration initially approves the U.S. citizenship for the endorsement sought, regardless of what is reflected on the Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center’s application.

## IV. Transfer or Sale of United States Flag Vessels

There were no United States purse seine vessels that were sold or transferred in calendar year 2023.

## V. Assessment of Landings and Trends

The preliminary landing data for 2023 (available through February 8, 2024) show more than 90,000 metric tons of tuna landed by the U.S. purse seine fleet with treaty licenses (Table 3). Although 2023 data is relatively complete, information presented in Table 3 is considered indicative and preliminary. Landing information for 2022 was also updated in this report. Compilation of timely landing data is a challenge with many U.S. purse seine vessels offloading in foreign ports. There is a considerable time lag between offloading and when the National Marine Fisheries Service receives final species composition and cannery receipts. As such, landing trends may be adjusted upon final calculation of total landings by port.

Preliminary 2023 landing estimates indicate cumulative landings for the U.S. purse seine fleet with treaty licenses, decreased by more than 16,000 metric tons from 2022. In 2023, 63 percent of the U.S. fleet catch was offloaded in American Samoa and the remainder of the U.S. fleet catch was offloaded in other Pacific ports. In recent years, many vessels fished in the eastern Pacific, western, and central Pacific Ocean. In 2023, all 13 vessels with treaty licenses were listed on the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Regional Vessel Register.

In 2022, a greater proportion of landings by U.S. purse seine vessels occurred in eastern Pacific ports, in part due to COVID-related waivers in place in the western and central Pacific Ocean, and requirements to have, “Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program,” certified observers on vessels that land fish caught in the eastern tropical Pacific. COVID-waivers in the western and central Pacific sunsetted at the end of 2022, and the majority of landings by U.S. purse seine vessels shifted to ports in the western and central Pacific in 2023.

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna landing estimates are combined given that species differentiation as reported by vessels is typically inaccurate.

## VI. Evaluation of Capacity and Trends in the Western Pacific Purse Seine Fleet

During 2023, there was a total of 13 U.S. flagged purse seine vessels licensed in the treaty area, which is the same number of licensed vessels in 2022, and is the lowest number of licensed vessels since the treaty started (Figure 1).

**Table 3.** Tuna landings of U.S flagged Western Pacific purse seine vessels with treaty licenses, by species and port, 2022-2023.

<b>2022</b>	<b>Tuna Landings<sup>7</sup> (metric tons)</b>			
<b>Port</b>	<b>Skipjack</b>	<b>Yellowfin and Bigeye</b>	<b>Total<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>%</b>
<b>United States Ports</b>				
Pago Pago, American Samoa	36,010	2,625	38,636	36%
<b>Foreign Ports</b>				
Manta, Ecuador	47,109	6,071	53,180	49%
Mazatlán, Mexico	5,098	2,868	7,965	7%
Other <sup>9</sup>	6,551	2,118	8,669	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,767</b>	<b>13,683</b>	<b>108,450</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>2023</b>	<b>Tuna Landings (metric tons)</b>			
<b>Port</b>	<b>Skipjack</b>	<b>Yellowfin and Bigeye</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>United States Ports</b>				
Pago Pago, American Samoa	49,521	8,117	57,639	63%
<b>Foreign Ports</b>				
Christmas Island, Kiribati	3,035	1,163	4,198	5%
Noro, Solomon Islands	3,037	6,981	10,018	11%
Paita, Peru	5,547	6,089	11,636	13%
Other <sup>10</sup>	5,777	2,379	8,156	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,917</b>	<b>24,730</b>	<b>91,646</b>	<b>100%</b>

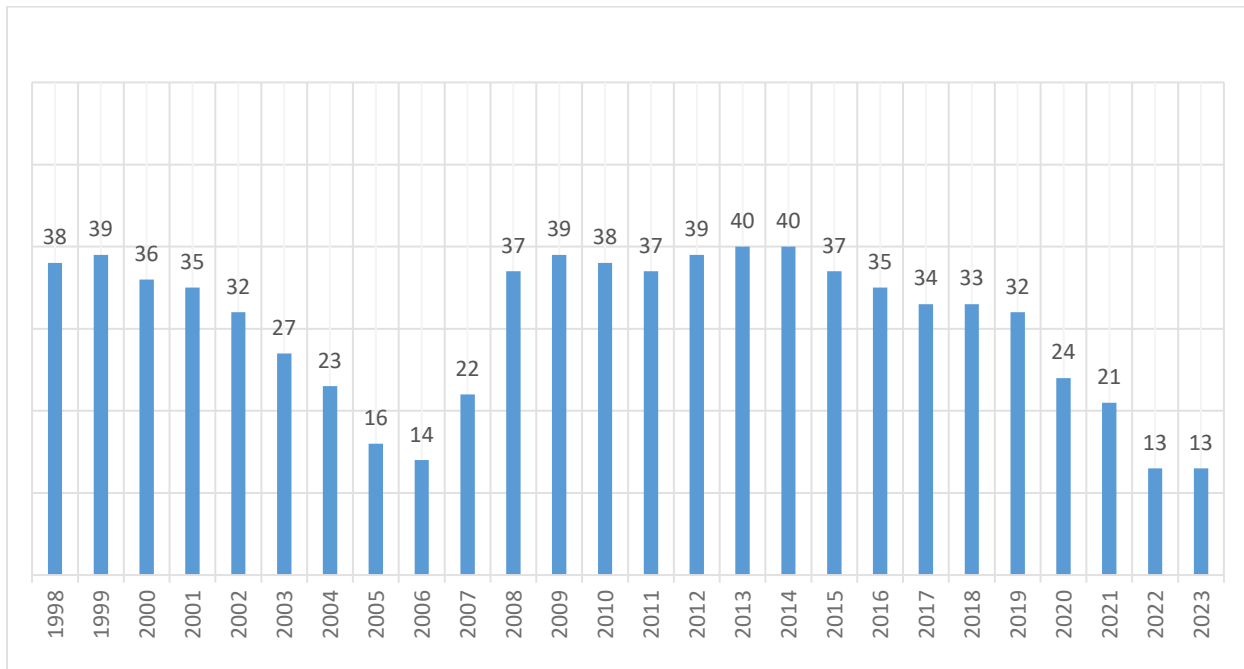
<sup>7</sup> Landings include transshipments.

<sup>8</sup> Aggregate cells may not sum to total due to rounding.

<sup>9</sup> Combined data from the following ports: Chiapas and Manzanillo, Mexico and Paita, Peru.

<sup>10</sup> Combined data from the following ports: La Union, Philippines, Manta, Ecuador, and Papeete, French Polynesia.

**Figure 1:** Number of U.S. Flagged Seine Vessels Licensed in the Treaty Area 1998-2023



## Appendix: Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
IMO	International Maritime Organization
MBRLLC	Member Managed Limited Liability Company
NVDC	National Vessel Documentation Center
U.S.	United States