

# Big Australian firm partners with PNA on tuna imports

The Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) was honored for its “vision” in developing and managing a sustainable fishery in the western and central Pacific, while gaining new global certification for sustainably caught yellowfin tuna last month.

“I am humbled that from our small office here in the Marshall Islands we have been able to obtain international recognition for the vision that we have to manage our tuna fisheries effectively,” said Dr. Transform Aqorau, PNA’s CEO, commenting on winning the annual Seafood Champion Awards in the “Vision” category at the SeaWeb Seafood Summit in Malta recently.

Meanwhile, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) announced that free-school caught yellowfin from PNA waters is now certified to carry the MSC eco-label. The new MSC certification for free-school caught yellowfin follows on MSC’s 2011 certification of skipjack tuna caught without using fish aggregating devices (FADs). PNA is the first major free school purse seine yellowfin tuna fishery to achieve MSC certification. The certified fishery catches around 140,000 tons of yellowfin tuna a year, accounting for half of all yellowfin caught within PNA waters.

“This is a very progressive step for the tuna industry,” said Maurice Brownjohn, PNA Commercial Director of the new yellowfin sustainability certification. “The PNA looks forward to working with brands, restaurants and retailers to increase the supply of MSC labeled sustainable tuna.”

Already new orders are increasing for sustainably caught tuna from PNA waters. As the new certification by MSC for free-school caught yellowfin was being declared in February, the major Australian seafood retailer John West announced a commitment to partner with PNA’s Pacific label for the Australian market. Key to this partnership, which will see over 100 million cans of Pacific-



Free school-caught yellowfin in PNA Zones is now internationally certified as “sustainable” adding new marketing opportunities for PNA catches. Photo: Hilary Hosia

## Fishing tenders told to slow down

Fishing vessels using Majuro lagoon were warned last week by RMI Ports Authority to “slow down” their tender boats when near the Uliga Dock area where other vessels are anchored.

The warning is the third notice Ports Authority has made to the fishing fleet and follows ongoing complaints from non-fishing boat owners that fishing vessel tenders blast in and out of the Uliga Dock area at high-speed. Near collisions with smaller boats have also been reported.

As of Friday, there were 14 purse seiners and 15 tuna carrier vessels in port Majuro, which means there is a high-level of tender traffic from the vessels to the dock.

Ports Authority Seaport Manager James Bing wrote shipping agents for the fishing fleet last week that “all skiff operators should reduce speed to ‘no wake’ at 300 meters when approaching the Uliga Dock and use extreme caution when exiting the inner basin returning back to mother ships.” He said vessels that violate this directive could face legal action resulting in “severe penalties and/or seizure of the skiff and crew.”

cal-MSC-certified sustainably caught skipjack tuna hit the shelves in Australia, is the PNA tuna fishery’s sustainability certification by the globally recognized MSC.

John West’s market launch of Pacific-MSC labeled tuna was called a “world first” because of its magnitude.

MSC confirmed that the John West commitment to bring MSC-certified tuna from PNA waters into the Australian market is “the largest offering of MSC-labeled canned tuna in the world. By completely trans-

forming its supply chain to source from the certified PNA fishery, John West is leading the way to help ensure our oceans stay healthy and teeming with life for generations to come.”

Pacific MSC certified tuna is now available in 12 countries. “PNA tuna sold with the MSC ecolabel also carries the Pacific logo in clear representation of the end market’s commitment to the PNA island nations as custodians and protectors of a truly valuable marine resource throughout centuries and the generations to come,” said Brownjohn.

## ROC funds home solar

RMI officials are expected to sign off soon on an agreement with Taiwan’s International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF) for \$4 million to be used as a revolving loan fund for purchasing home solar units for residents of Majuro and Ebeye.

The loan fund is to be managed by Marshall Islands Development Bank. The scheme was initiated by the Marshalls Energy Company while Kwajalein Senator David Paul was general manager. After about two years of discussions between MEC and ICDF and Taiwan government officials, the plan received approval from ICDF late last year.

The revolving loan fund will assist urban residents to improve household energy efficiency and reduce power costs by increasing reliance on solar power, which in turn is expected to reduce MEC’s costs for diesel to generate electricity as the share of solar-generated power increases.

Public Works Minister Tony Muller said the agreement will be signed in the near future once mutually agreeable dates for the ceremony can be agreed.

“Everyone wins from this agreement,” he said.

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