

NGO perspective

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

TUNA INITIATIVE

Value of Pacific tuna

The importance of fish to the people of the Pacific Islands cannot be over-emphasized (see foldout map). The reason – 98% of the 27 million km² under the jurisdiction of the 22 Pacific Island countries and territories is ocean. For many of these 'large ocean states' tuna is their greatest resource. Tuna is in demand worldwide, and the catch from Pacific Island waters supplies more than 30% of the global tuna market.

For several Pacific Island countries, access fees paid by industrial fleets to harvest tuna provide 10–80% of all government revenue. In addition, tuna fishing and processing have created more than 23,000 jobs across the region.

Tuna is also vital to local food security. In a region where non-communicable diseases due to unhealthy diets and changes in lifestyle are the worst in the world, increasing local access to fish is a practical way of improving nutrition. The problem is that population growth is driving a gap between sustainable harvests from coastal fisheries and the fish needed for food security. Tuna is needed to fill the gap.

A new Roadmap

Recognising the importance of fisheries, Pacific Island Leaders recently endorsed the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*.

Rectangular Snip

The goals of the *Roadmap* include:

- sustaining key tuna species by agreeing on target reference points for harvests within three years, and moving the status of each species clearly towards these targets within 10 years;
- doubling the value of the tuna catch within 10 years;
- creating 18,000 new jobs in tuna processing, and as vessel crew, observers and fisheries management staff, within 10 years; and
- increasing the amount of tuna allocated to domestic consumption each year by 40,000 tonnes within 10 years.

Challenges

The *Roadmap* is a blueprint for progress but several challenges must be overcome to reach the goals. Bigeye tuna is overfished, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a constant threat, the region's longline fisheries are barely economic, increased effort in the purse-seine fishery targeting skipjack tuna is driving down the value of the catch, fishing on the high seas is largely uncontrolled, and almost 90% of the tuna caught in the waters of Pacific Island countries is processed outside the region. In addition, climate change is expected to alter the distribution and abundance of tuna.

The Conservation International (CI) Tuna Initiative will build on strong existing partnerships and engagement throughout the region to assist Pacific Island countries address these challenges, and help fulfill their aspirations for the use of tuna resources in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO).



Goals:

- Assist national and regional fisheries agencies sustain tuna catches and the ecosystem that supports them
- Increase benefits from tuna fisheries for Pacific Island economies and communities

Initial emphasis on climate change adaptation and food security



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Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

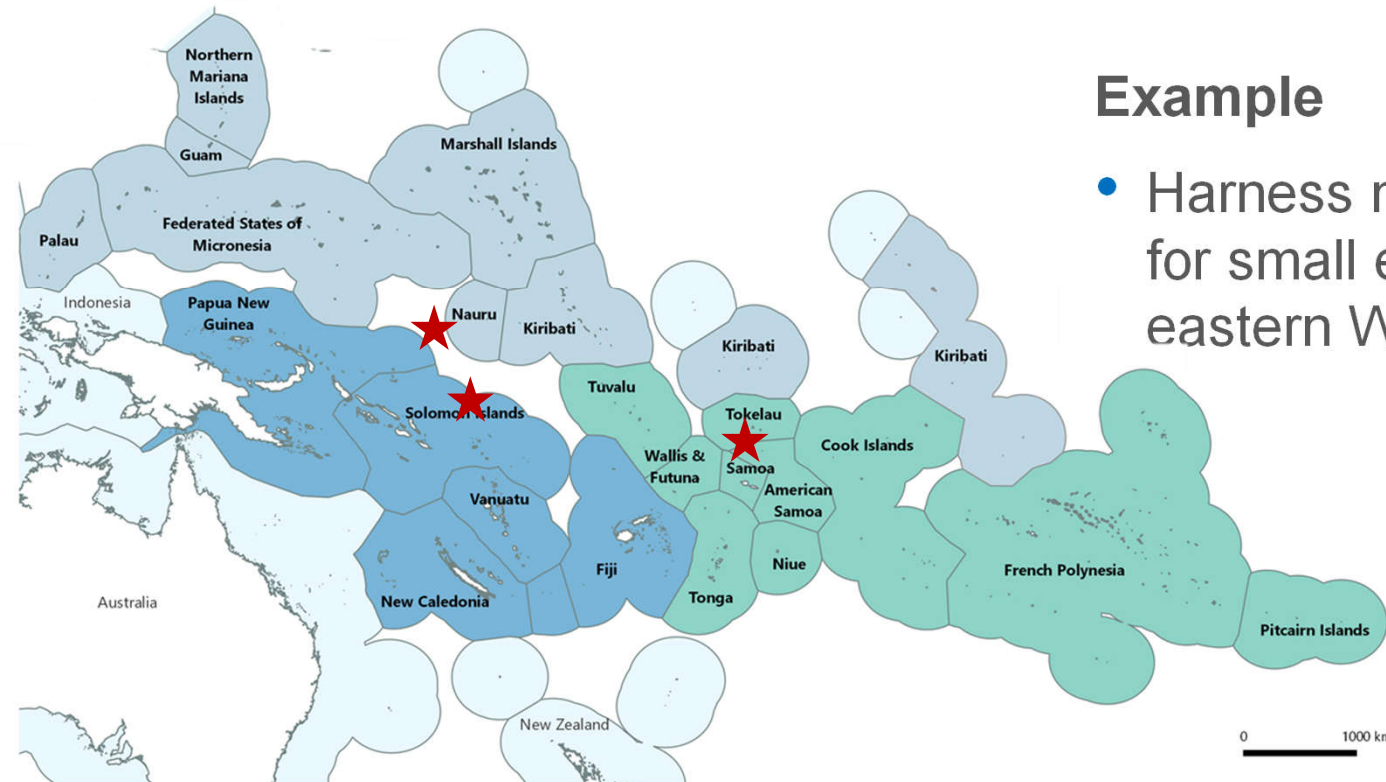


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PACIFIC ISLANDS
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AGENCY

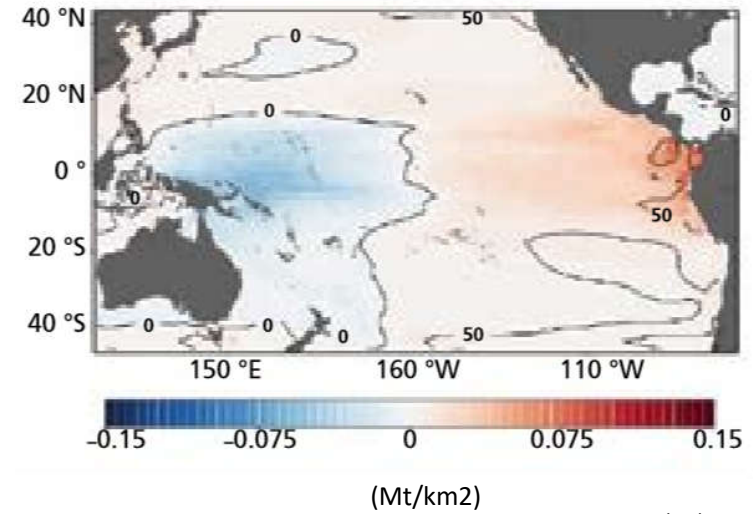
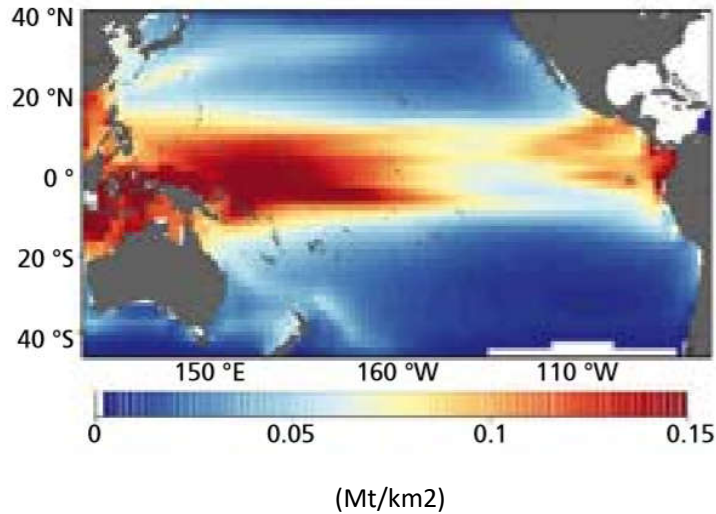
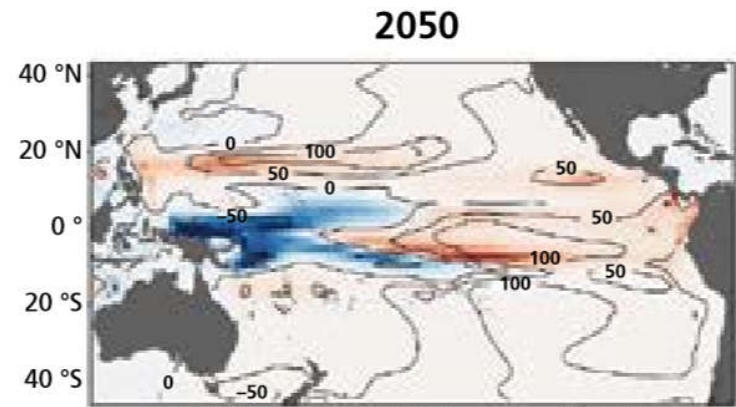
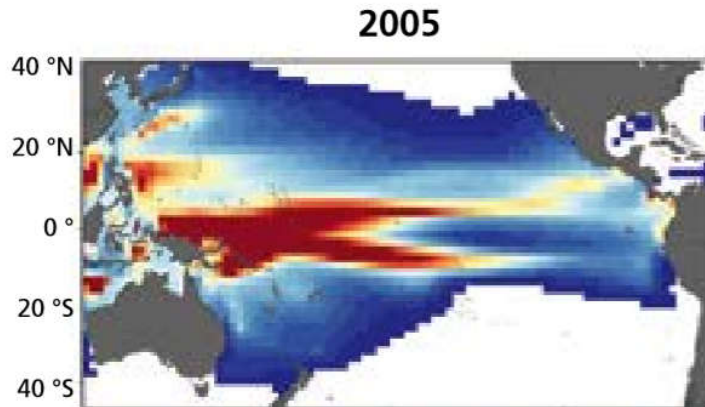
Guide adaptations to optimise economic benefits from tuna

Example

- Harness more of the transshipping trade for small economies in central and eastern WCPO

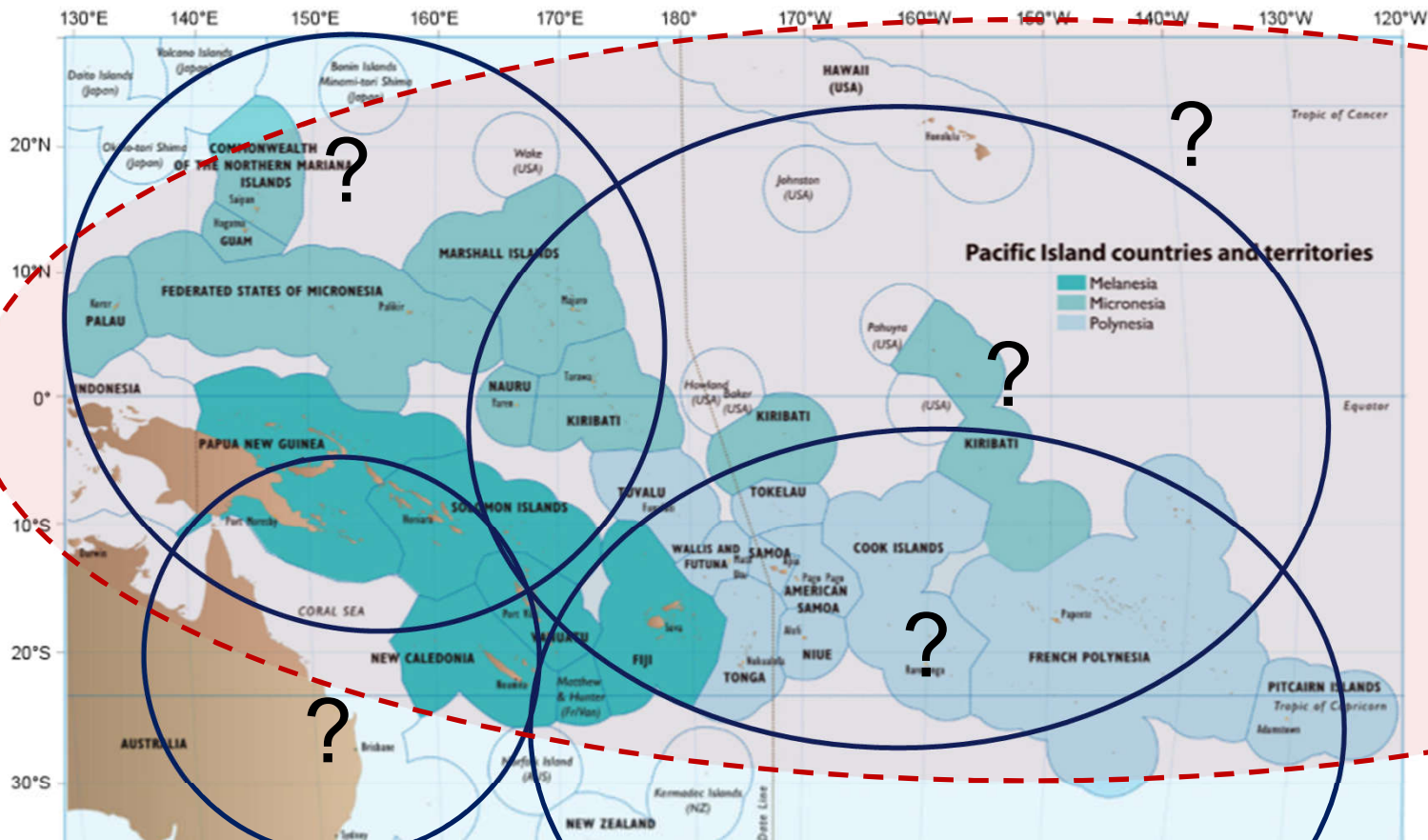


Projected effects of climate change on tuna



Source: Lehodey et al. (2017), Bell et al. (2018)

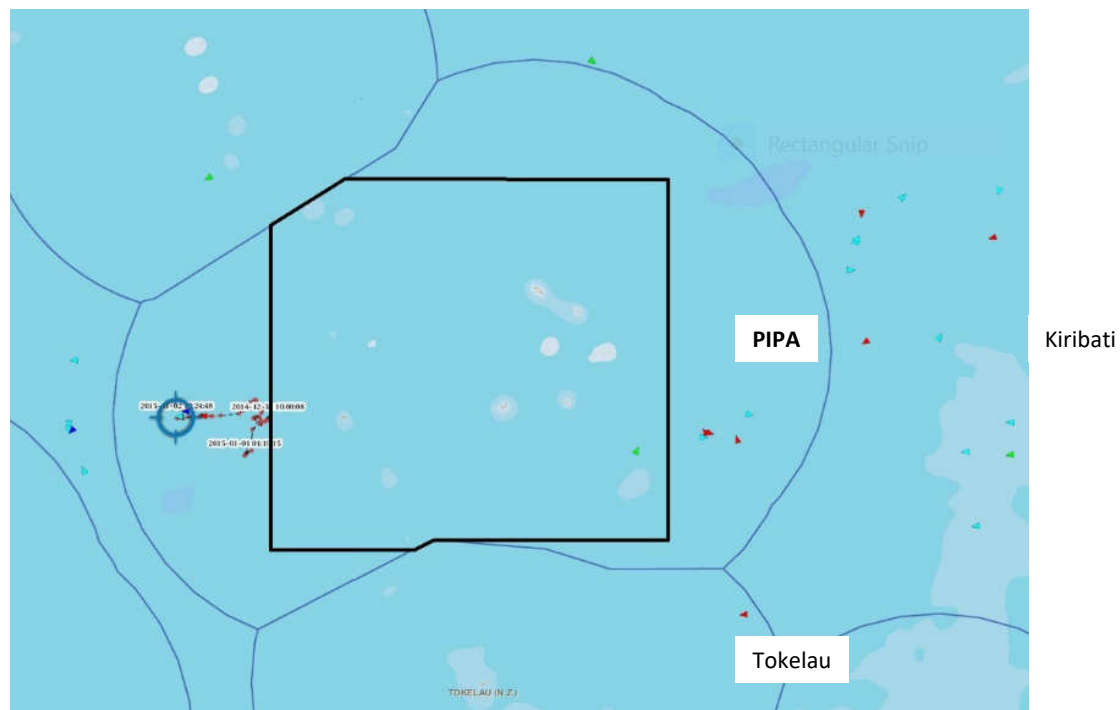
Reduce uncertainty in climate projections



- Separate climate modelling needed for each stock

Evaluating spatial management for tuna

- Phoenix Island Protected Area (Kiribati)

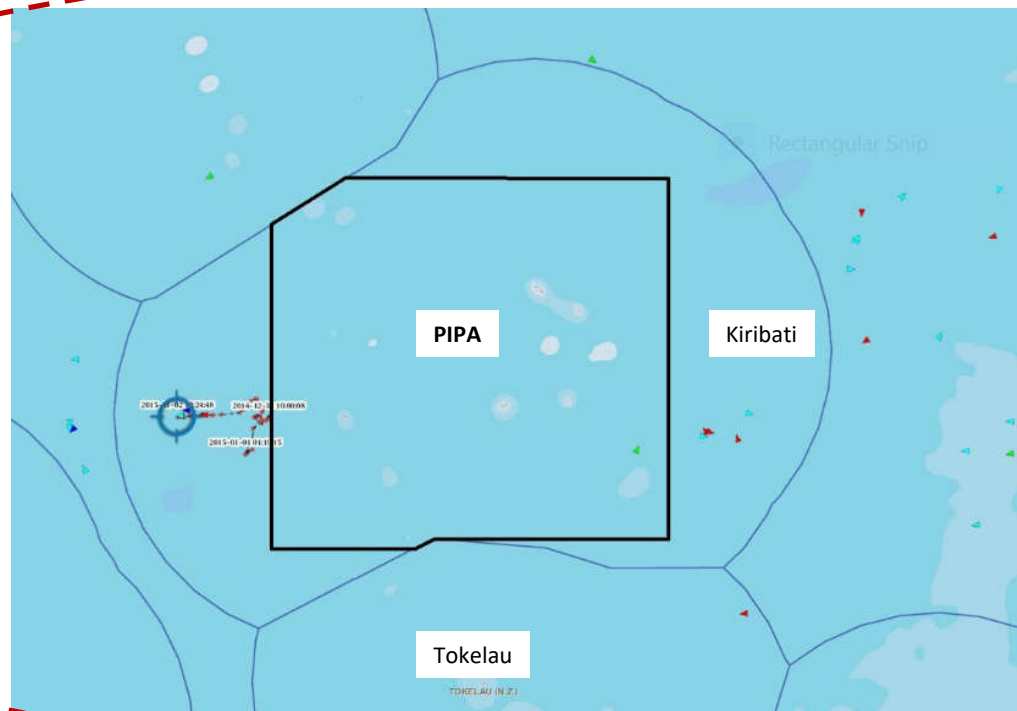


- **Big question**

Can spatial management add value to prevailing, successful management arrangements?

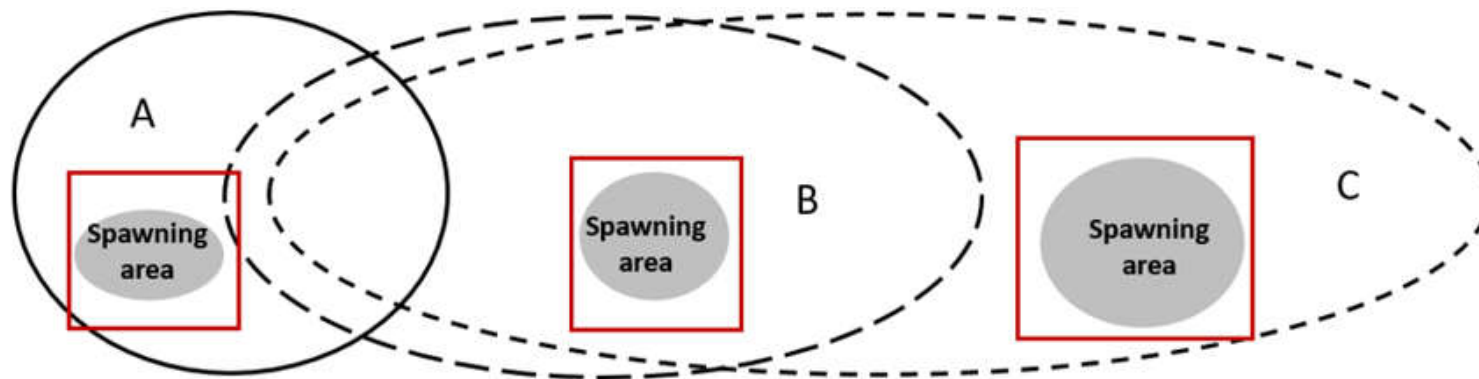
Evaluating spatial management for tuna

- Phoenix Island Protected Area (Kiribati)



Evaluating spatial management for tuna

- Protect spawning areas



Strengthen tuna marketing initiatives



NGO Tuna Forum

Key areas of interest

- ✓ Development and implementation of comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies
- ✓ Effective monitoring and management of FADs
- ✓ Strengthened monitoring, control and surveillance tools purse-seine and longline fisheries, and at-sea transshipment
- Improved implementation of bycatch mitigation practices, with an emphasis on longline fisheries