

Tropical tuna fisheries
In the Indian Ocean of Iran

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By: Mokhtar Akhondi

Akhondi2200@yahoo.com

M-Akhondi, DG Fishery Affairs of Iran Fisheries Organization

Tuna catches covers 6 percent of the world total catch, but in Iran more than 40 percent of the country catch belongs to tuna and tuna-like species. So tuna catch in Iran has attach-importance.

Because 6500 out of 11500 fishing vessel with 60000 fishers are engaged in fishing activities and as the capture fishery in Iran is handled mainly small scale, so there are variety of socio-economic and management issues.

Islamic republic of Iran has a longest coastline in Persian Gulf and Oman sea and Caspian sea with 5800 km long (including islands) and 193 port and landing places encompassing 140 thousand fishermen and 11500 fishing crafts with annual marine capture of around 514 thousand tonnes in 2013. Figure 1 shows the country catch trend in recent decade.

Total country catches North (Caspian Sea) & southern Waters (Persian Gulf and Oman Sea)

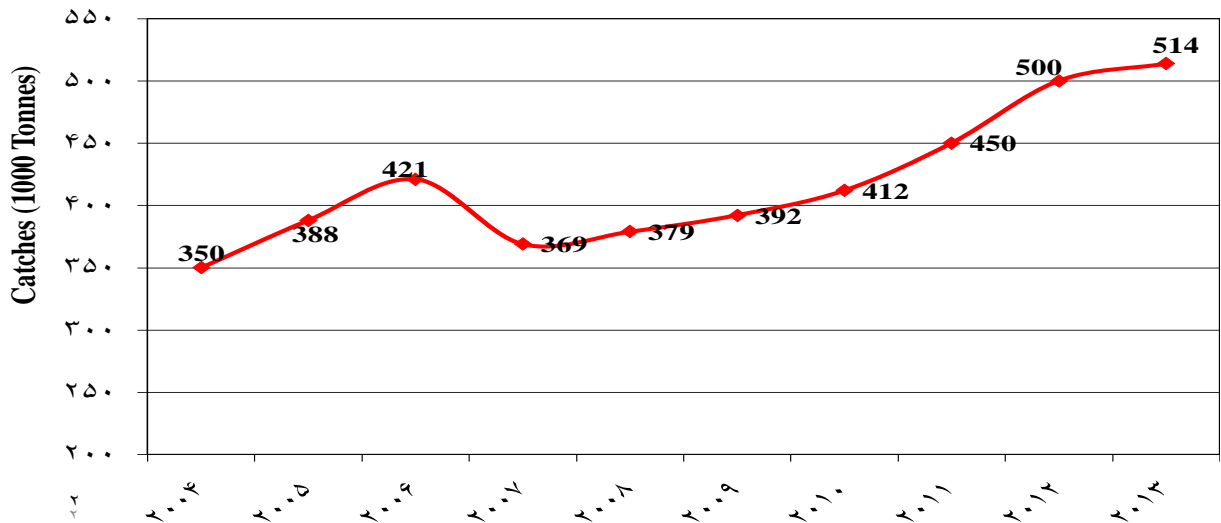


Figure1. Total country catches North (Caspian Sea) & southern Waters (Persian Gulf and Oman Sea)

Around 40 thousand tonnes of the catch was exploited from northern fishery (Caspian Sea) and 474 thousand tonnes from southern waters (Persian Gulf and Oman Sea). Of total catch amount of southern waters, 240 thousand tonnes attributed to large pelagic, 170 thousand tonnes demersals, 50 thousand tonnes small pelagic, 10 thousand tonnes shrimp and shellfish and 4 thousand tonnes myctophids. Figure2

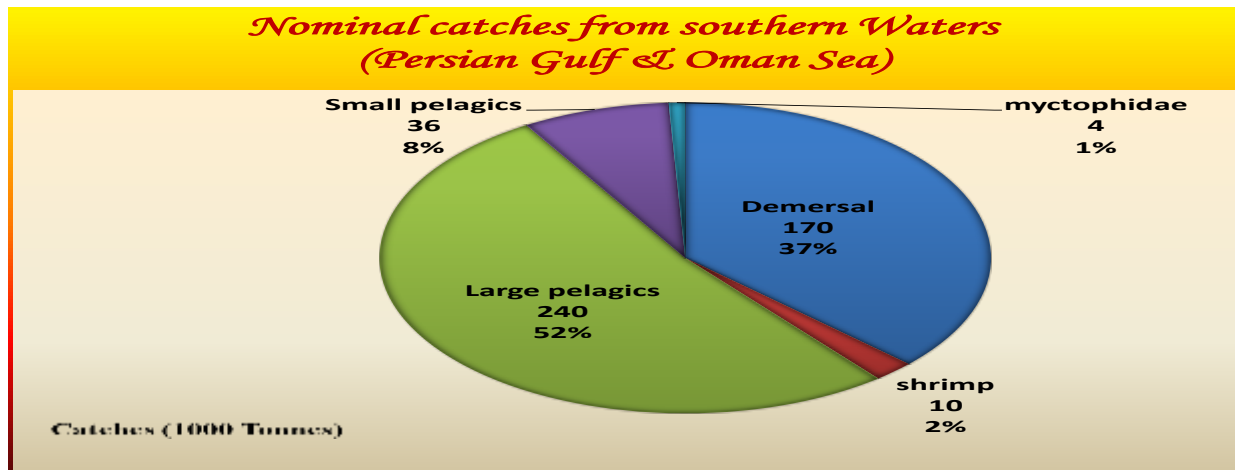


Figure2. Naminal catches from southern Waters (Persian Gulf and Oman Sea)

Catches of tuna and tuna-like species have increased by 30%, from 161 thousand tonnes in 2004 to around 210 thousand tonnes in 2013. *Figure 3*

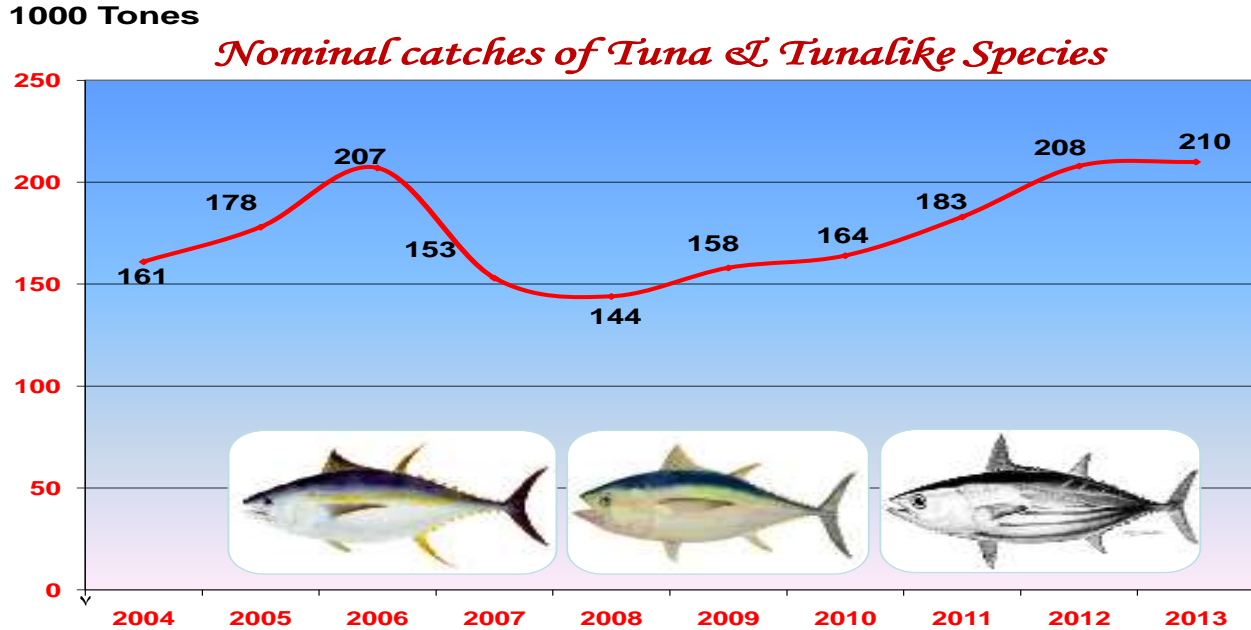


Figure3. Nominal catches of Tuna & Tunalike Species

Catches of Tropical tuna have decreased by 36%, from 105 thousand tonnes in 2004 to around 67 thousand tonnes in 2013. Although the peak amount of catch in 2006 was equivalent to 144 thousand tons. *Figure 4*

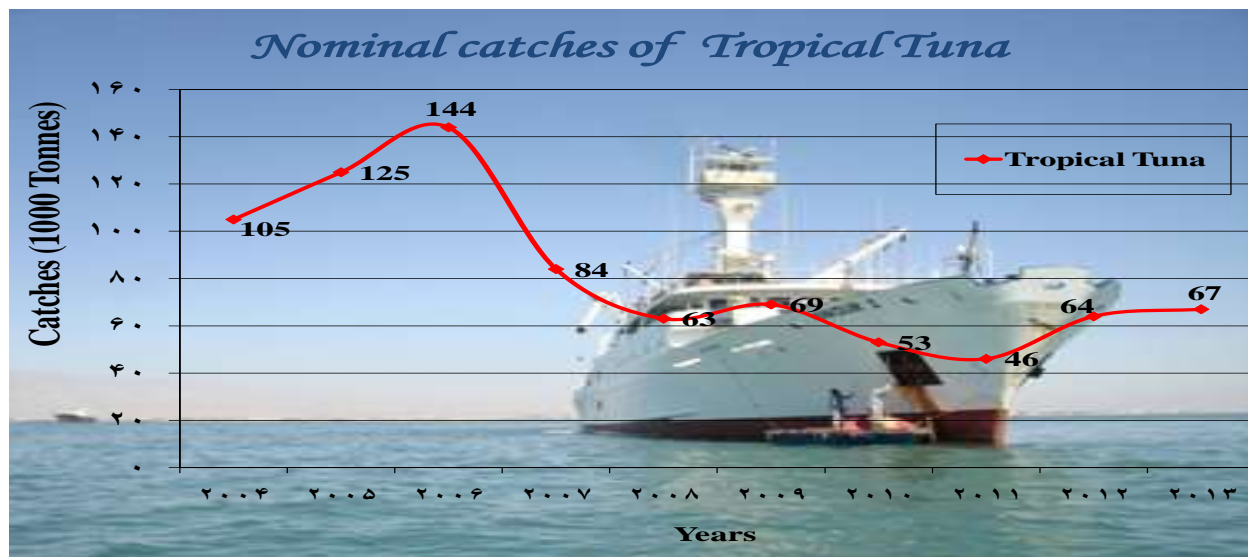


Figure4. Nominal catches of Tropical Tuna

The average annual catch of tropical tuna fishes in Iran during the past 10 years was 81,983 tonnes and its catch in 2013 was equivalent to 67,378 tonnes which shows 18% decrease in compare to mentioned 10-years average catch. *Figure 5*

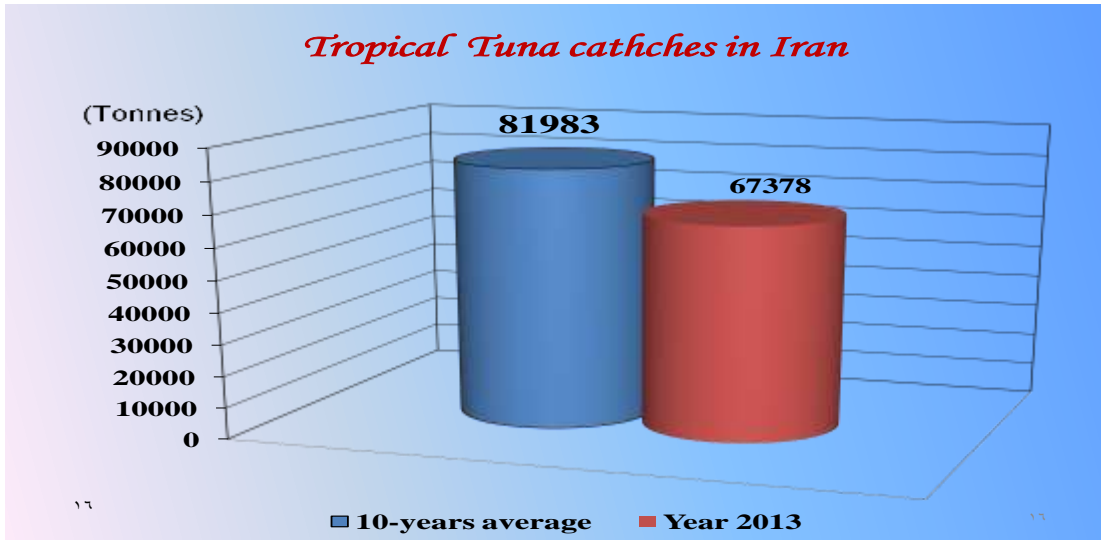


Figure5. Tropical Tuna catches in Iran

The share of tropical tuna catch from total marine capture production in 2006 was around 34% which has fallen to 13% in 2013. (Tropical tuna catch in 2006 declined by 53% from 144 thousand tones to 67378 tonnes in 2013).*Figure6*

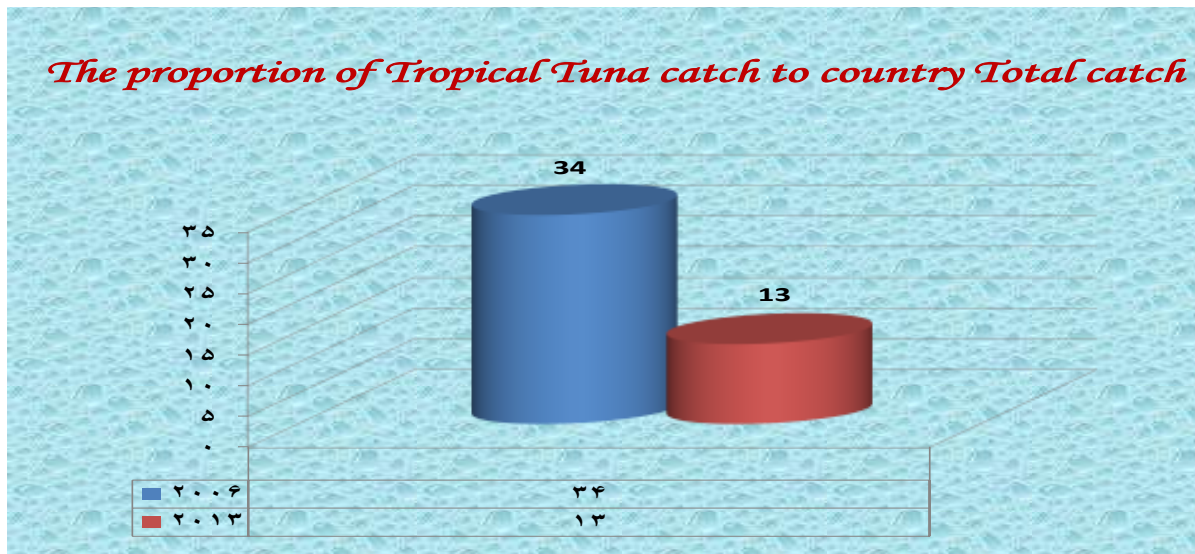


Figure6. The proportion of Tropical Tuna catches to country Total catch

Skipjack 10-years average catch was 49616 tonnes and its' catch in 2013 was 33327 tonnes which shows a drop of 33% compared with 10-years average catch.

Yellowfin tuna 10-years average catch was 32019 tonnes and its' catch in 2013 was 32403 tonnes which shows 1% increase compared with 10-years average catch.

The following diagrams show the catch trend of yellowfin tuna and skipjack. maximum catches of skipjack was 103,000 t in 2006 but after phenomenon of piracy it declined sharply to its minimum amount of 17,000 t in 2011, after that it increased slightly to 33,000 t in 2013.

The maximum catch amount of yellowfin tuna was reported 51,000 t in 2004 but after phenomenon of piracy it declined to 16,000 t in 2007, after that it increased slightly to 32,000 t in 2013. *Figure 7*

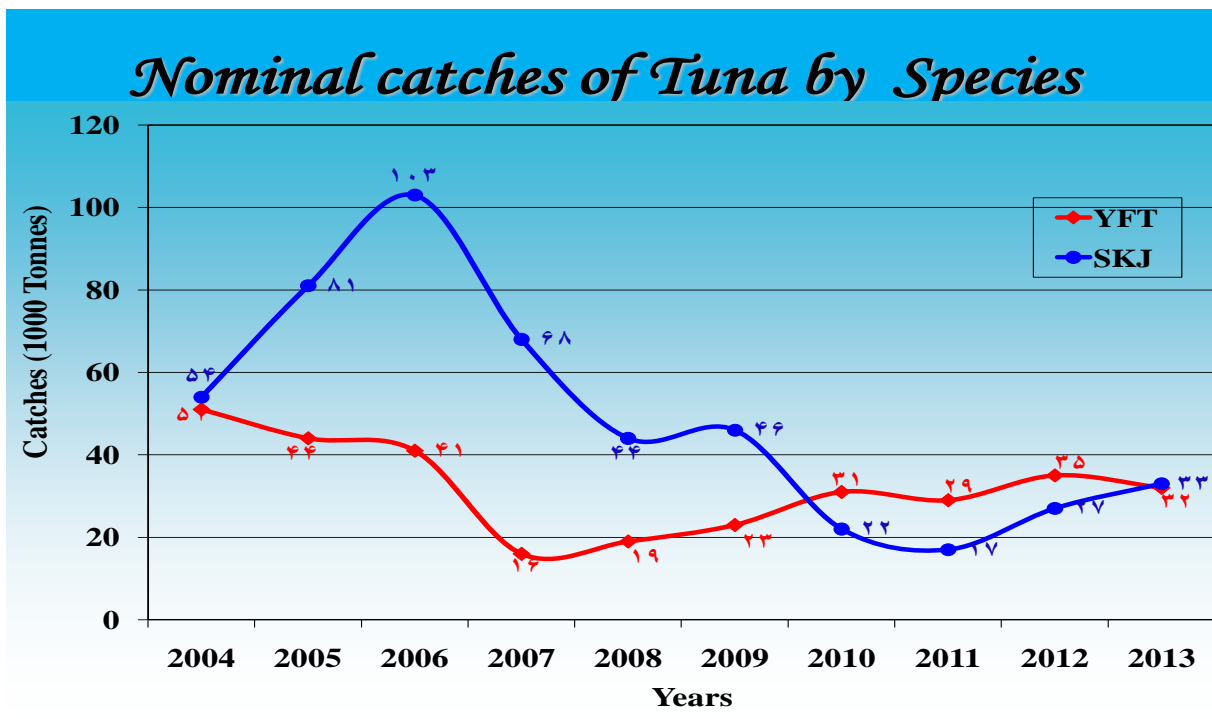


Figure7. Nominal catches of Tuna by species

Catches of Bigeye tuna in Figure 8 shows the amount of 105 tonnes in 2011 and 1649 tonnes in 2013. About 100 tonnes of catch in 2013 was caught by purse seine fishery and 1549 tonnes by gillnet fishery.

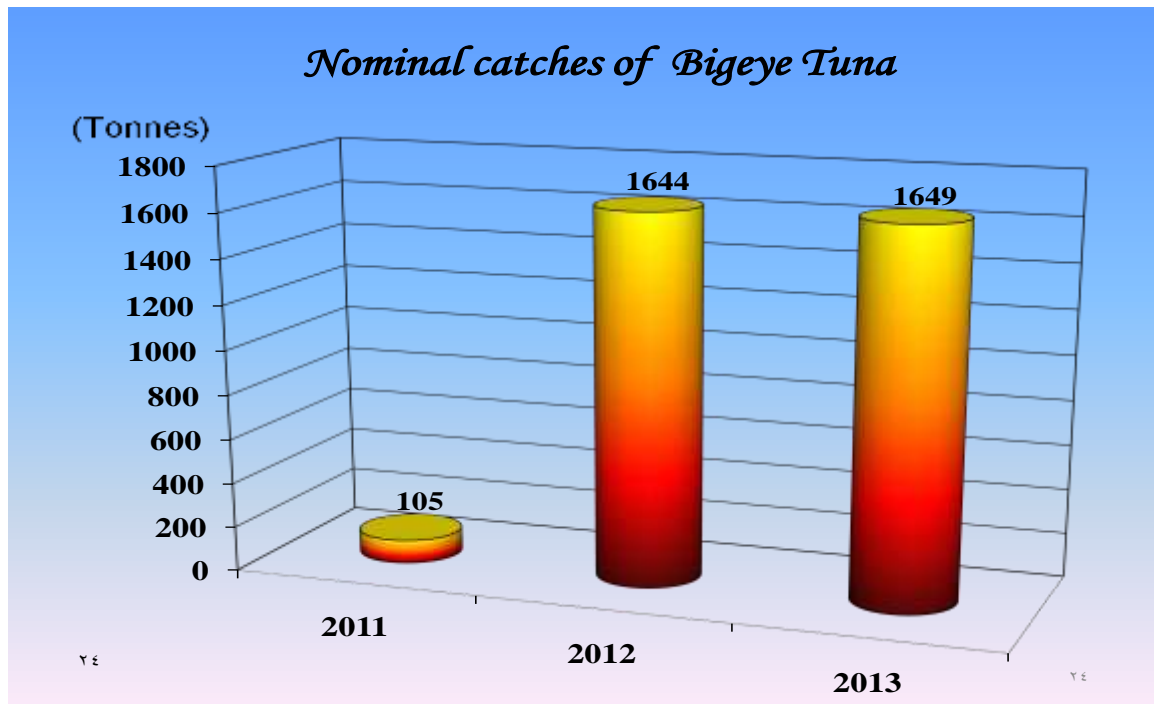


Figure8. Nominal catches of Bigeye Tuna

As you see in Figure 9, after piracy, fishermen shifted their fishing activities from Endangered Areas to their local fishing grounds which lead to increase in catches of longtail tuna, from 19,000 t in 2005 to 81,000 tonnes in 2011 and 67,000 t in 2013.

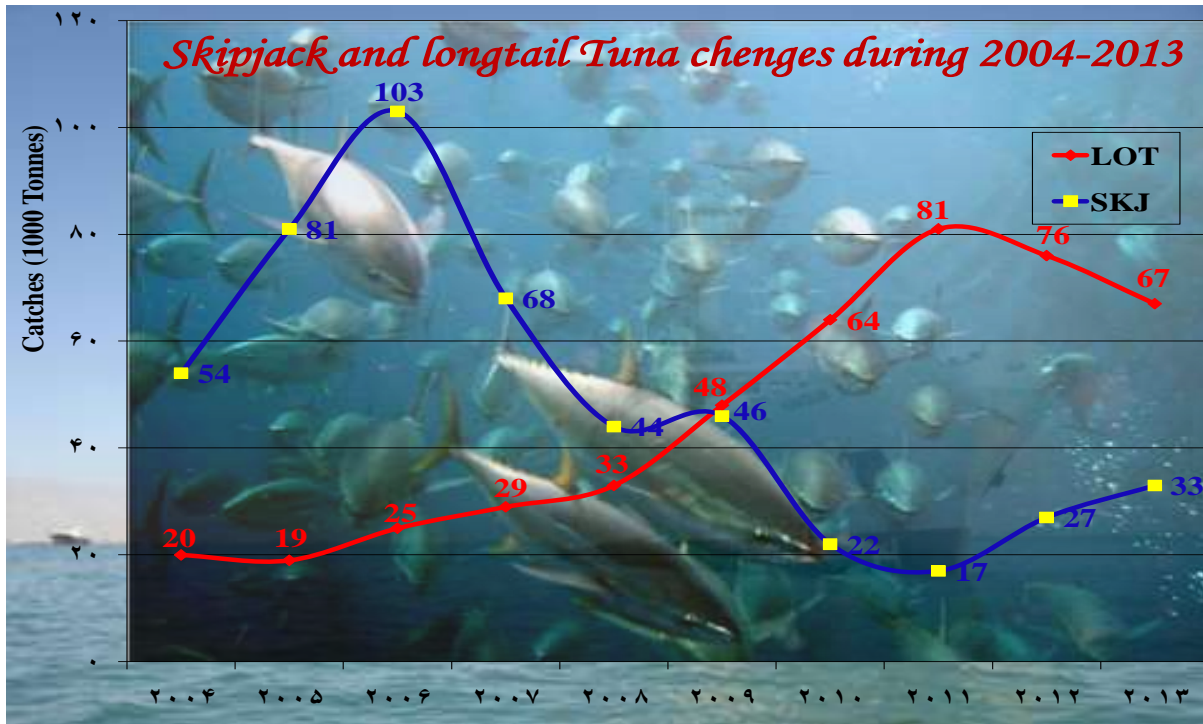


Figure9. Skipjack and longtail Tuna changes during 2004-2013

Around 6752 fishing crafts were engaged in tuna and tuna-like fishing operation, of which 3741 were gillnet boats of less than 3 GT, 1330 gillnet Dhows of less than 50 GT, 534 gillnet Dhows of 51-100 GT, 338 gillnet Dhows of 100 more than 100 GT, 805 Trolling boats of less than 3 GT, and 4 Purse seiners. Their Total fishing efforts were 1,040,000 days in 2013 of which 916,100 days carried out by gillnet fishery, 123,000 days by trolling and 727 days by purse seine fishery. Figure 10&11

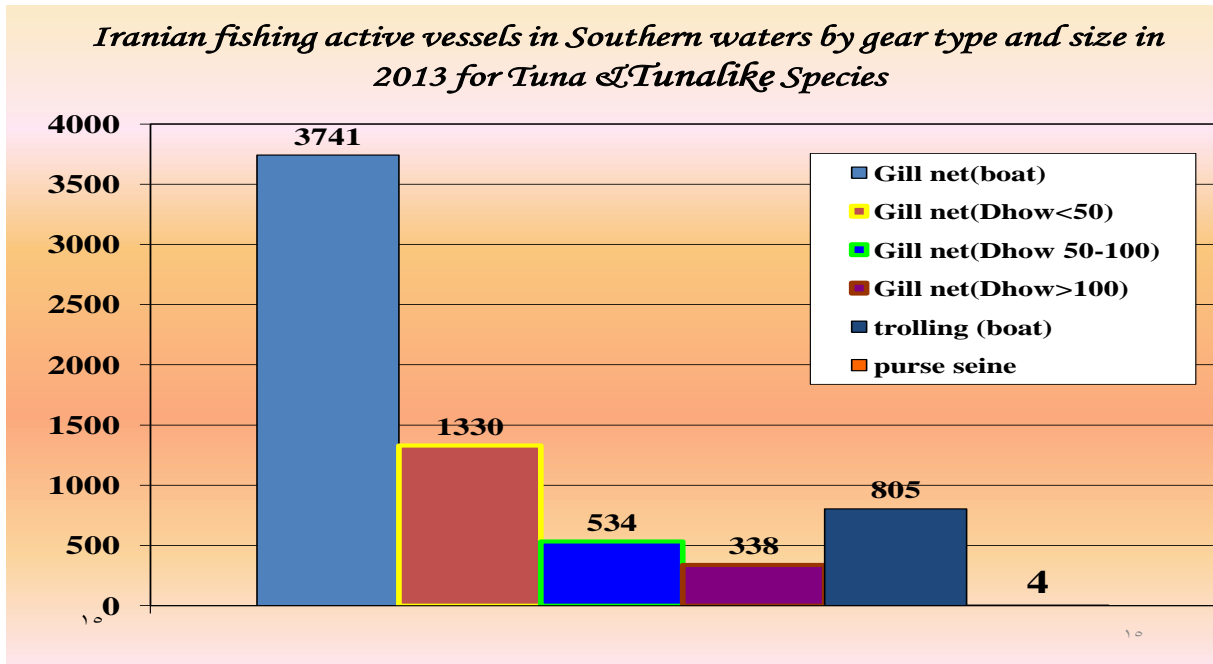


Figure10. Iranian fishing active vessels in Southern waters by gear type and size in 2013 for Tuna & Tunalike Species

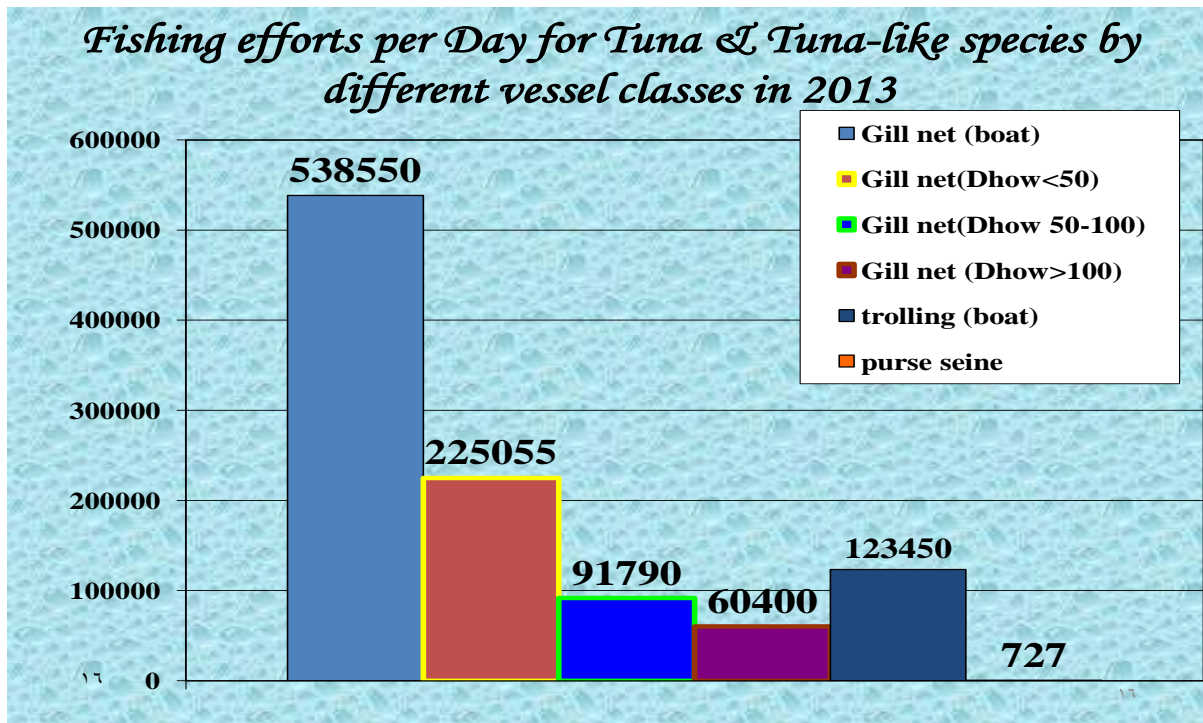


Figure11. Fishing efforts per Day for Tuna & Tuna-like species by different vessel classes in 2013

In past three years, Islamic republic of Iran carried out the following actions in line with recommendation and approvals of Tropical Tuna Working Party, SC and the Commission, which lead to enhancement of compliance to provision and regulations from 11% in 2010 to 65% in 2013.

- Upgrading the capture fishery statistical software (Called AMAR Software) and formulating suitable reports in accordance with IOTC demands, designing the AMAR software under SQL 2008 and web system, Meet certain statistical hardware requirements for enumerators and computer operators, inter alia: fish measuring board, scale, computer, camera and train them.
- Complete and report the purse seiner's logbooks.
- by-catch composition for gillnet and pure sine fisheries were studied and some species of sharks , Billfishes and Bigeye were identified, recorded and reported to the IOTC Secretariat.
- On time provision of catch statistics, fishing efforts and fish biometry data in the break down of Province, Month, Species, Vessel class and fishing method.
- Designing logbook for gillnet fishery, print and disseminate it, Training of those who are involved in these issues in provincial levels, and the captain of fishing vessels.
- Persian translation of ID cards for bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna, duplicate and disseminate it among related landing places.
- Two more landing centers have been added to compile length & weight data for tuna and tuna-like species
- Annual reporting of the number and specification of active and registered fishing vessels in the Indian Ocean tuna Commission.

- Increasing the number of tropical tuna size frequency from 1811 in 2010 to 27823 in 2013, also increasing the number of tuna and tuna-like species from 33877 in 2010 to 69778 in 2013.

We are attempting to solve the remained defects and comply fully with IOTC provisions and regulations. Meanwhile it shall be noted that our fishing fleet is a small scale fleet and some regulations are very hard to follow in compare to those countries with industrial fleet and few vessels.