



# Distant Water Tuna Fleet (aka U.S. Purse Seine Fleet)

Annual Report to Congress

*April 30, 2010*



Homeland  
Security

*United States Coast Guard  
National Marine Fisheries Service*

# Foreword

We are pleased to present the following report, "Distant Water Tuna Fleet, a.k.a. U.S. Purse Seine Fleet," which has been prepared by the United States Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in response to Section 421 of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006.

In order to monitor the efficacy of the provision, this annual report addresses the vessels covered under Section 421 of the Act, landings of tuna, and capacity and trends associated with the fleet.



Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV  
Chairman, Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Ranking Member, Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee

The Honorable James L. Oberstar  
Chairman, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Doc Hastings  
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources

I am happy to answer any further questions you may have, or your staff may contact my Senate Liaison Office at (202) 224-2913 or House Liaison Office at (202) 225-4775.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Thad W. Allen, written in a cursive style.

Thad W. Allen, Admiral  
Commandant  
U.S. Coast Guard

A blue ink signature of Eric C. Schwaab, written in a cursive style.

Eric C. Schwaab  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration



## Distant Water Tuna Fleet Annual Report to Congress

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# I. Legislative Language

Section 421 of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (PL 109-241) states:

(e) REPORTS.—On March 1, 2007, and annually thereafter 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 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 vessel.
- (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. Background

On July 11, 2006, the President signed Public Law 109-241, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 (the 2006 Act), to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2006, to make technical corrections to various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes. Section 421 of this Act includes a provision allowing United States-flagged purse seine vessels fishing exclusively for highly migratory species to employ foreign citizens to meet manning requirements, excluding the master. This provision applies for a 48-month period from the date of enactment of the Act, and only if, after timely notice of a vacancy to meet the manning requirements, no United States citizen personnel are available. Moreover, it is only applicable to the purse seine vessels operating in and out of American Samoa and under a 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 (South Pacific Tuna Treaty), or transiting to or from the treaty area (the fleet).

In order to monitor the use and efficacy of the provision, the Coast Guard and the National Marine Fisheries Service are required to submit an annual report with information about the vessels covered under Section 421 of the Act, landings of tuna, and capacity and trends associated with the fleet.

This report addresses the requirements of Section 421(e) for calendar year 2009, and includes:

- The number and identity of vessels in the fleet using foreign citizens to meet manning requirements and any marine casualties involving such vessels (Table 1);
- The number of vessels in the fishery under United States flag, the percentage ownership or control of such vessels by non-United States citizens, and the nationality of such ownership or control (Table 2);
- A description of any transfers or sales of United States flag vessels and the disposition of such vessels, 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;
- The landings of tuna by purse seine vessels under United States flag in the previous two calendar years, including an assessment of landing trends, and a description of landing percentages and totals –
  - (1) delivered to American Samoa and any other port of the United States or its territories, and
  - (2) delivered to ports outside of the United States or its territories, including the identity of the port (Table 3); and
- An evaluation of capacity and trends in the fleet fishing in the Treaty area (Figure 1), and any transfer of capacity to other fisheries, including those managed under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

### III. Foreign Crew Employment and Reportable Marine Casualties in 2009

**Table 1: Foreign citizens employed to meet manning requirements and reportable marine casualties involving United States-flagged Western Pacific purse seine vessels. (See notes at end of Table.)**

VESSEL NAME <sup>1</sup>	VESSEL ID NUMBER	FLAG STATE	USES FOREIGN CITIZENS FOR MANNING <sup>2,3</sup>	REPORTABLE MARINE CASUALTIES, 2009 <sup>4</sup>
AMERICAN EAGLE	1206090 (8974398)	US	YES, 36 of 37 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
AMERICAN ENTERPRISE	1209513 (9294628)	US	YES, 35 of 36 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
AMERICAN VICTORY <sup>5</sup>	1215847	US	YES, 39 of 40 crewmembers	DEATH, August 16 <sup>th</sup> , crewmember believed to have diabetic shock/seizure.
AMERICAN TRIUMPH (New Entrant)	1215734	US	YES, 37 of 38 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
CAPE BRETON (New Entrant)	1060977 (7803255)	US	YES, 22 of 23 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
CAPE COD	599831 (7806283)	US	YES, 20 of 22 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
FV CAPE ELIZABETH	620755 (7823384)	US	YES, 19 of 22 crewmembers	OIL SPILL, August 12 <sup>th</sup> in Pago Pago Harbor, about 50 gallons, cleaned up.  FIRE/SINKING, December 20 <sup>th</sup> 750 NM NW America Samoa, crew rescued.
CAPE FERRAT (New Entrant)	1074874 7803267	US	YES, 20 of 21 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
CAPE FINISTERRE	610466 (7912094)	US	YES, 20 of 22 crewmembers	DEATH, February 2 <sup>nd</sup> in South Pacific Ocean, crewmember fell overboard and drowned.
F/V CAPE MAY	645777 (8103028)	US	YES, 20 of 21 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
CAPE HATTERAS (New Entrant)	1217627 (8215493)	US	YES, 22 of 23 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
CAPE SAN LUCAS	1209784 (8119651)	US	YES, 20 of 21 crewmembers	OIL SPILL, May 18 <sup>th</sup> in Pago Pago Harbor, about 2 gallons of hydraulic oil, cleaned up.
CAROL LINDA	624971 (7827445)	US	YES, 24 of 27 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
DANIELA	531005 (7107716)	US	YES, 21 of 22 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
FREISLAND	1216624 (9310953)	US	YES, 26 of 28 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED

**Table 1: continued**

<b>VESSEL NAME <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>VESSEL ID NUMBER</b>	<b>FLAG STATE</b>	<b>USES FOREIGN CITIZENS FOR MANNING <sup>2,3</sup></b>	<b>REPORTABLE MARINE CASUALTIES, 2009 <sup>4</sup></b>
ISABELLA	1212240 (8111465)	US	YES, 20 of 22 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
JEANETTE	565986 (7505865)	US	YES, 17 of 20 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
KOORALE	545564 (7233280)	US	YES, 17 of 20 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
MAJESTIC BLUE	1212048	US	YES, 22 of 23 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
OCEAN CHALLENGER	1209712 (9517264)	US	YES, 33 of 34 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
OCEAN CONQUEST	1202618 (9097343)	US	YES, 37 of 38 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
OCEAN ENCOUNTER	1202619 (8996218)	US	YES, 31 of 32 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
OCEAN EXPEDITION	1205812 (9097367)	US	YES, 37 of 38 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
OCEAN GALAXY	1214839	US	YES, 33 of 34 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
OCEAN WARRIOR	1205808 (9097317)	US	YES, 33 of 34 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
PACIFIC BREEZE	1212040	US	YES, 24 of 25 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
PACIFIC PRIDE	1214250	US	YES, 35 of 36 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
PACIFIC PRINCESS	600678 (7806271)	US	YES, 17 of 20 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
PACIFIC RANGER	1214248	US	YES, 33 of 34 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
PROUD HERITAGE	552892 (7366726)	US	YES, 27 of 28 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
RAFFAELLO	539046 (7212377)	US	YES, 19 of 21 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
SEA BOUNTY	1214841	US	YES, 35 of 36 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
SEA DEFENDER	1202621 (8996190)	US	YES, 26 of 27 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
SEA ENCOUNTER	604592 (7823360)	US	YES, 17 of 21 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED

**Table 1: continued**

<b>VESSEL NAME</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>VESSEL ID NUMBER</b>	<b>FLAG STATE</b>	<b>USES FOREIGN CITIZENS FOR MANNING</b> <sup>2,3</sup>	<b>REPORTABLE MARINE CASUALTIES, 2009</b> <sup>4</sup>
SEA FOX	1207469 (9097329)	US	YES, 35 of 36 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
SEA HONOR	1210858 (9517276)	US	YES, 31 of 32 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
SEA QUEST	1203206 (9097355)	US	YES, 34 of 35 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
SEA TRADER	1207470 (9097379)	US	YES, 35 of 36 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED
WESTERN PACIFIC	564010 (7508893)	US	YES, 17 of 22 crewmembers	NONE REPORTED

**Legend:**

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

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

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

**Footnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Where included, parenthetical note after a vessel name shows status as a re-entrant and licensee to fish in the treaty area, or as a new entrant and licensee to fish in the treaty area during 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Crewmembers include officers, engineers, and general crew, such as ordinary seamen, able seamen, oilers, mechanics, and cooks. The Master must be a U.S. citizen.

<sup>3</sup> Specific information may not be available due to inability by the Coast Guard to visit the vessel in port, or to contact the agent or owner during the canvass period.

<sup>4</sup> Information on Reportable Marine Casualties is generated from the Coast Guard’s Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) database.

<sup>5</sup> Vessel AMERICAN LEGACY was renamed AMERICAN VICTORY in 2009.

## IV. Percentages of Foreign Ownership or Control in 2009

**Table 2: Percentage of foreign ownership or control of United States-flagged Western Pacific purse seine vessels. (See notes at end of table.)**

VESSEL NAME (ENDORSEMENT)	VESSEL ID NUMBER	FLAG STATE	FOREIGN OWNERSHIP/CONTROL	NATIONALITY FOREIGN OWNER
AMERICAN EAGLE (Registry)	1206090 (8974398)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
AMERICAN ENTERPRISE (Registry)	1209513 (9294628)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
AMERICAN VICTORY (Registry)	1215847	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
AMERICAN TRIUMPH (Registry)	1215734	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
CAPE BRETON (Registry)	1060977 (7803255)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
CAPE COD (Fishery & Registry)	599831 (7806283)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
FV CAPE ELIZABETH (Fishery & Registry)	620755 (7823384)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
CAPE FERRAT (Registry)	1074874	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
CAPE FINISTERRE (Fishery & Registry)	610466 (7912094)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
CAPE HATTERAS (Registry)	1217627 (8215493)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
F/V CAPE MAY (Fishery & Registry)	645777 (8103028)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
CAPE SAN LUCAS (Registry)	1209784 (8119651)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
CAROL LINDA (Registry)	624971 (7827445)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
DANIELA (Fishery, Registry & Coastwise)	531005 (7107716)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
FREISLAND (Registry)	1216624 (9310953)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
ISABELLA (Registry)	1212240 (8111465)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN

**Table 2: continued**

<b>VESSEL NAME (ENDORSEMENT)</b>	<b>VESSEL ID NUMBER</b>	<b>FLAG STATE</b>	<b>FOREIGN OWNERSHIP/CONTROL</b>	<b>NATIONALITY FOREIGN OWNER</b>
JEANETTE (Fishery & Registry)	565986 (7505865)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
KOORALE (Fishery & Registry)	545564 (7233280)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
MAJESTIC BLUE (Registry)	1212048	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
OCEAN CHALLENGER (Registry)	1209712 (9517264)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
OCEAN CONQUEST (Registry)	1202618 (9097343)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
OCEAN ENCOUNTER (Registry)	1202619 (8996218)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
OCEAN EXPEDITION (Registry)	1205812 (9097367)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
OCEAN GALAXY (Registry)	1214839	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
OCEAN WARRIOR (Registry)	1205808 (9097317)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
PACIFIC BREEZE (Registry)	1212040	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
PACIFIC PRIDE (Registry)	1214250	US	Not reported, not required	UNKNOWN
PACIFIC PRINCESS (Fishery & Registry)	600678 (7806271)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
PACIFIC RANGER (Registry)	1214248	US	Not reported, not required	UNKNOWN
PROUD HERITAGE (Fishery & Registry)	552892 (7366726)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN
RAFFAELLO (Fishery & Registry)	539046 (7212377)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
SEA BOUNTY (Registry)	1214841	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
SEA DEFENDER (Registry)	1202621 (8996190)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
SEA ENCOUNTER (Registry)	604592 (7823360)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN

**Table 2: continued**

<b>VESSEL NAME (ENDORSEMENT)</b>	<b>VESSEL ID NUMBER</b>	<b>FLAG STATE</b>	<b>FOREIGN OWNERSHIP/CONTROL</b>	<b>NATIONALITY FOREIGN OWNER</b>
SEA FOX (Registry)	1207469 (9097329)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
SEA HONOR (Registry)	1210858 (9517276)	US	Not reported, not required	UNKNOWN
SEA QUEST (Registry)	1203206 (9097355)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
SEA TRADER (Registry)	1207470 (9097379)	US	50% or less	UNKNOWN
WESTERN PACIFIC (Fishery & Registry)	564010 (7508893)	US	25% or less	UNKNOWN

**Legend:**

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

**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 that are the subject of 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 that are 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 U.S. or granted coastwise trading privileges by special legislation.

**VESSEL ID NUMBER** –The Coast Guard identification number. When available, the Lloyd’s number is listed parenthetically.

**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 the vessels subject to this report are all owned by organizations, not individuals. In such cases, and when required, applicants need only certify that U.S. citizen ownership and/or management control are above a certain percentage. The majority (28 of 39) of the vessels that are subject to this report carry only a “Registry” endorsement on their certificate of documentation. 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. For the purpose of obtaining a “Registry” endorsement, if the vessel is owned by a partnership, at least 50 percent of the equity in the partnership must be owned by U.S. citizens. None of the vessels subject to this report are owned by a partnership. 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 has no information regarding the nationality of any non-U.S. stock or equity holders. Eligibility for a “Fishery” trade endorsement on vessels owned by an organization requires that 75% or more of the stock or equity interest in the organization at each tier and in aggregate is owned by U.S. citizens, and that control and management decisions for the corporation, limited liability company, or partnership rest with a U.S. citizen. The Coast Guard does not require information regarding nationality of any foreign ownership interest when applying for documentation. The Coast Guard requires evidence to determine U.S. citizenship qualification for the endorsement sought.

## V. Transfers or Sales of United States-Flagged Vessels in 2009

There were no transfers or sales of any licensed vessels subject to this report in 2009.

## VI. Assessment of Landings and Trends

Preliminary 2009 landings data show over 152,000 metric tons of tuna landed by the U.S. purse seine fleet operating in the western and central Pacific (Table 3). This year's assessment of landings should be viewed with some caution given the tsunami that affected American Samoa, which also affected NMFS's ability to monitor fleet landings. As such, the landing trends may vary somewhat upon final calculation of total landings by port.

Nonetheless, continuing a trend identified in last year's report, the preliminary 2009 landings suggest that transshipments from the Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei) replaced American Samoa as the principle port of unloading for the U.S. fleet. If the data hold, the current trends suggests that almost 70% of the catches by the U.S. fleet were transshipped through Pacific Island ports. With the finalization of the 2008 landings data, the trends reported in last year's report were maintained for the reporting period.

2009 landing estimates will increase significantly as NMFS receives and compiles additional 2009 landing reports from vessel operators. Yellowfin and bigeye tuna are combined given that species differentiation as reported by the vessels is typically inaccurate. Port sampling data, available later in the year, are used to verify landings by species for stock assessment and other purposes.

**Table 3: Tuna Landings of United States-flagged Western Pacific purse seine vessels, by species and port, 2008-2009<sup>1</sup>.**

2009 LANDING PORT	TUNA LANDINGS * (Metric Tons)			
	Skipjack	Yellowfin & Bigeye	Total	%
<b>U.S. PORTS</b>				
Pago Pago, American Samoa	63585	10495	74080	27.9
Pago Pago, Transshipment	4196	612	4808	3.1
<b>FOREIGN PORTS</b>				
Solomon Islands	18735	1770	20525	13.4
Federated States of Micronesia	46950	3843	50824	33.3
Papua New Guinea	20291	2562	22853	15.0
Republic of the Marshall Islands	8290	680	8970	5.9
Tarawa, Kiribati	210	0	210	0.1
Masan, Korea	1050	0	1050	0.7
General Santos, Philippines	930	30	960	0.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>138,246</b>	<b>14,476</b>	<b>152,772</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>2008</b>				
<b>"FINAL" TUNA LANDINGS * (Metric Tons)</b>				
LANDING PORT	Skipjack	Yellowfin & Bigeye	Total	%
<b>U.S. PORTS</b>				
Pago Pago, American Samoa	64103	12481	76548	40.0
<b>FOREIGN PORTS</b>				
Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands	32559	13822	46381	24.2

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia	17991	7650	25641	13.4
Rabaul, Papua New Guinea	14120	3078	12198	9.0
Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati	3047	1505	4552	2.4
Honiara, Solomon Islands	10904	3809	14713	7.6
Noro, Solomon Islands	290	174	464	0.2
Wewak, Papua New Guinea	3761	511	4272	2.3
Bangkok, Thailand	1553	122	1675	0.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>148,328</b>	<b>43,152</b>	<b>191,480</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> 2009 landings are based on reports received as of 14 January, 2010 and cover landings until about July 2009. Under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, NMFS landings data is not obligated to be reported until April 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Additional and final reports will not be available until later in 2010.

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

Under the current terms of the Treaty, 45 licenses are available to the United States, five of which are reserved for joint-venture arrangements with Pacific Island parties. As of December 31, 2009, there were 38 United States-flagged purse seine vessels licensed in the Treaty area. An additional vessel that was licensed throughout the year caught fire and sank in mid December, therefore a total of 39 vessels participated at some point of the year in 2009 and Figure 1 reflects this number (39).

Other than the four vessels that entered the fishery in calendar 2009, all other licensed vessels remained under ownership or control of U.S. citizens or organizations, and the vessels remained operational under the Treaty.

According to the NMFS, the number of vessels licensed and active in the fleet had steadily declined since the late 1990s. However, in 2007 this trend was reversed and the number of vessels increased significantly to a final count of 21 by the end of the calendar year (see Figure 1). The fleet continued to recover throughout 2008 and into early 2009, where it approached the limit of 40 “regular” licenses. The economic turmoil that caused a global recession also had a significant impact on the fleet in 2009. On the positive side, fuel oil costs dropped in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008 into 2009, however ex-vessel tuna prices declined significantly, reportedly due to financing problems with many canneries. Fuel prices increased through the latter half of 2009, while fish prices remained relatively low until about the end of the year before moving back upward. Fishing was rated as “fair” throughout most of the year, with some vessels doing above average while others fell below average. This unevenness in fishing success appears to have been especially true during the two month closure on fishing with fish aggregating devices (FADs). 2010 is expected to continue a trend of considerable uncertainty in the fishery in light of the impact of conservation and management measures invoked in 2009 and the prospect of additional conservation and management of yellowfin and bigeye tuna in the western and central Pacific. Strengthened regulations related to observer coverage, vessel monitoring systems, FAD fishing, and possibly catch retention are all expected to impact vessel operations in 2010—and beyond.

**Figure 1: Number of United States-flagged purse seine vessels licensed in the Treaty area, 1998-2009.**

