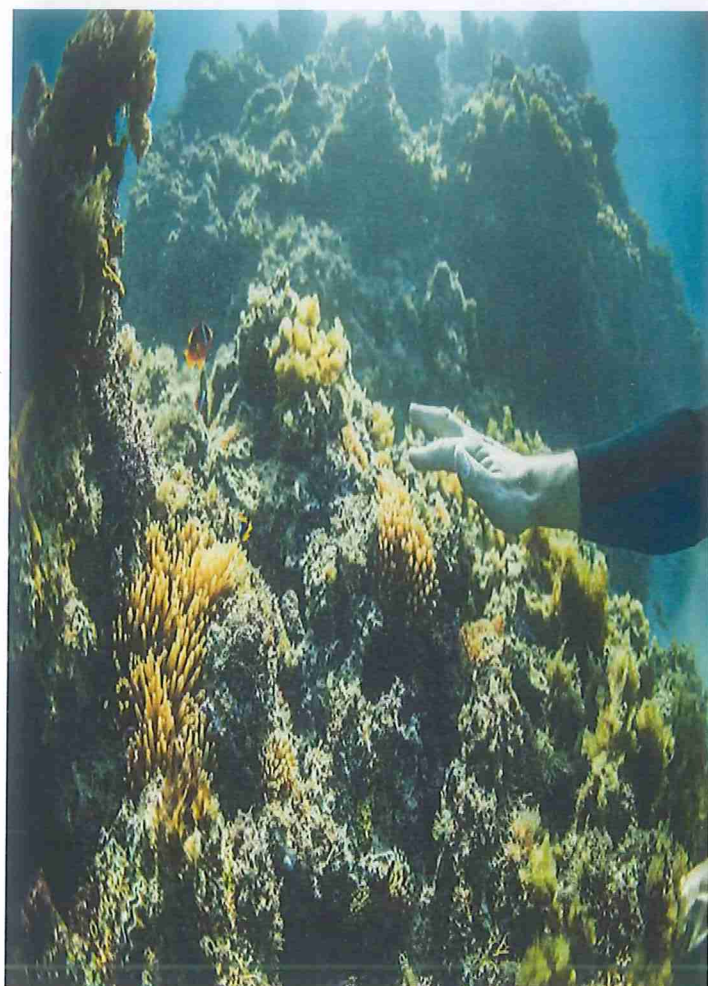


*TONGA*



National Coastal Fisheries Management  
and Development Plan

2023 – 2026



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## FOREWORD

Tonga is a small island developing state with limited land and natural resources. It is blessed with a vast ocean abundant with an array of fisheries resources. The marine environment plays a crucial role in providing food and supporting livelihood for the people of Tonga. Therefore, it is important to sustainably manage our coastal resources.

This is the first Coastal Fisheries Management Plan developed for Tonga in order to manage and sustain the coastal resources. Because we are a small island nation, we have many coastal communities that rely on the coastal resources for subsistence and commercial purposes. The need to develop a coastal plan was driven from the Tonga National Fisheries Policy, Tonga Fisheries Sector Plan and "A new song for Coastal Fisheries-Pathways to Change - the Noumea Strategy". It calls on Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to implement integrated coastal resources management arrangements, drawing on strengths and traditions of community, district, provincial and national levels of government to achieve sustainable island life.

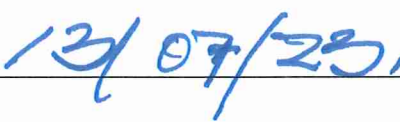
Tonga's Ministry of Fisheries continues to play the roles of managing fisheries under the Fisheries Management Act 2002 (the Act). The Act stipulates that the Secretary shall establish and keep under review plans for the conservation, management and sustainable utilization and development of fisheries within fisheries waters of the Kingdom.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand and the Pacific Community (SPC) for their technical guidance towards the development of this Plan. I also appreciate the financial assistances from the World Bank Project: Tonga Fish Pathway to Sustainable Ocean. Also, thanks to the Ministry of Fisheries staff and stakeholders who have put a lot of effort and time towards the preparation of this Plan.

It is therefore my pleasure to present this Plan to the Government, the people of Tonga and to invite and urge all to use this plan to work together for the common good of the fishery and to the people of the Kingdom of Tonga.

  
Hon. Acting Minister for Fisheries



  
Date

## DEFINITIONS

Word	Definition
CEO	
Export	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Means to take or cause to be taken out of the Kingdom for commercial or potentially commercial purposes, and includes providing commercial samples</li> </ul>
Home consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Means the export of fish in quantities less than 20 kilograms in weight for domestic consumption</li> </ul>
Small-scale fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fishing for subsistence fisheries and small-scale commercial for household consumption and sale or barter, (Also refer as artisanal fisheries).</li> <li>Fishing targeting finfish, octopus, lobster, sea cucumber, seaweed, clams and shellfish, tuna and nearshore pelagic species and invertebrates.</li> <li>Fishing techniques may involve diving (including spearfishing), hand lining, netting or gleaning (often by women), octopus fishing (a'afeke), drop lining and trolling.</li> <li>less than 12 m length with outboard engine or not</li> <li>Fishing inside the 12nm coastal waters</li> <li>small amount of capital and energy</li> </ul>
Small-scale fishers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>means fishers undertaking small-scale fisheries activities under the small-scale fishing vessels</li> </ul>
Small-scale fishing vessels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small-scale fishing vessels means vessels used for subsistence fisheries and small-scale fisheries</li> <li>Fishing vessels less than 12m in length with an outboard engine or no engine</li> <li>Use for fishing within 12nm of territorial waters</li> <li>Involve in any fishing activities that include but not limited to diving (including spear fishing), hand lining, net fishing, reef gleaning, octopus fishing (a'afeke) trolling.</li> <li>Conduct fishing using relatively small amount of capital and energy</li> </ul>
Territorial water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the waters under the jurisdiction of a state, especially the part of the sea within a stated distance of the shore (12 nautical miles from low-water mark).</li> </ul>
Internal waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>means (a) in respect of archipelagic waters, all waters landward of the closing lines: and (b) in any other case, all waters landward of any baselines</li> </ul>
Coastal water	The sea areas bordering the shoreline up to 6 nautical miles.



## ABBREVIATIONS

CROP	Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific
EEZ	Economic Exclusive Zone
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FAO	Food Agriculture Organization
FCD	Fisheries Compliance Division
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
FMDD	Fisheries Management and Development Division
FSD	Fisheries Science Division
LAF	Legal Acquisition Findings
MORC	Ministry of Revenue and Custom
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
NFC	National Fisheries Council
PIDP	Pacific Islands Development Program
PICT	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
SMA	Special Management Area
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TCFMDP	Tonga Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Plan
USP	University of the South Pacific

## PART 1: PRELIMINARY

### 1.1. Context and Purpose

Tonga's Coastal fishery effectively contributes to the economic development of the country, as well as the livelihoods of people in Tonga. People's standards of living highly depends on coastal fisheries resources for food and income. Due to the increasing pressures from the external threats such as climate change, natural disasters and overpopulation, greater management of coastal fisheries in Tonga is required to ensure the long-term sustainability of these resources.

This Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Plan 2023 – 2026 (the Plan) is the Ministry's effort to conserve marine resources and ensure that coastal fisheries resources continue to play crucial role in society contributing to food security, as well as economic and social development.

### 1.2. Vision

A healthy marine environment that maintains and supports sustainable and resilient coastal fisheries resources. This is underpinned by community-based fisheries management approaches that ensure food security and long-term ecological, social and economic benefits for the people of Tonga.

### 1.3. Mission

The Ministry of Fisheries aims to promote accountability, co-management, evidence and community-based fisheries management.

### 1.4. Scope

The Tonga National Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Plan 2023-2026 applies to:

- a) any coastal fisheries resource found within the fishing areas from the intertidal zone to fringing reefs and coastal waters
- b) any fishing activities within that area that include, but are not limited to:
  - i) net fishing
  - ii) trolling, line and reef fishing

iii) spear fishing

c) any fishers who harvest for personal consumption or sell any of their catch within Tonga territorial and internal fisheries waters

d) any export of coastal fisheries resources for commercial or home consumption purposes

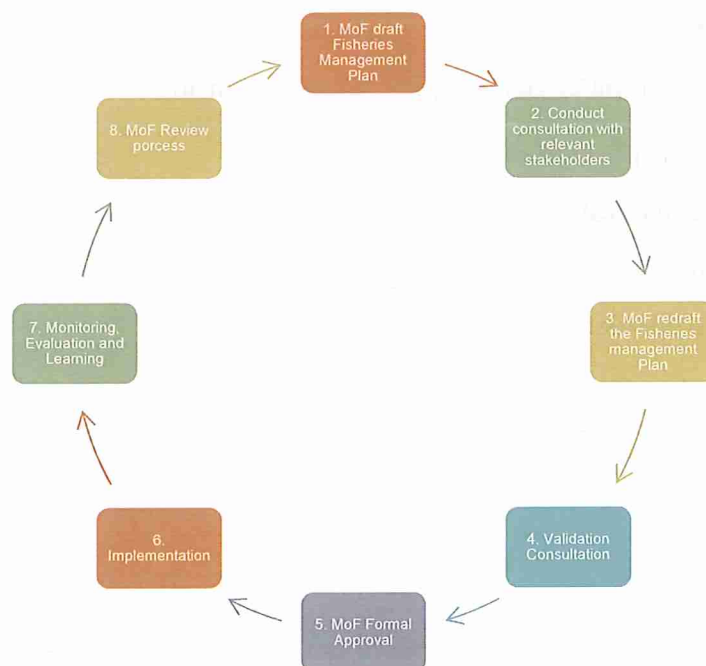
2. This Plan does not apply to the Marine Aquarium, Aquaculture, Sea cucumber, Deep-water Fishery and SMA management.

1.5. Goal

An ecologically and economically sustainable coastal fishery, enhancing food security and livelihoods to maximize its benefits for the people of Tonga.

1.6. Development process

The development of a new fisheries management plan is guided by the Fisheries Management Act 2002. According to that Act, the Ministry of Fisheries shall indicate the present state of the fishery, and if that fishery is exploited, then a management plan must be developed.





### 1.7. Institutional, legal and policy framework

The Ministry of Fisheries, in close collaboration with communities, are responsible for managing coastal fisheries resources, as directed from the Fisheries Management Act 2002, Fisheries Management & Conservation Regulations 2008 and Local Fishing Regulations 2009.

That legislation states that a fishery management plan, prepared by the CEO for Fisheries, shall:

- Identify the characteristics of the fishery, including current state of its exploitation
- Specify the objectives to be achieved in the management of the fishery
- Specify the management and development strategies and appropriate management measures to be adopted for the fishery
- Specify the licensing regime to be applied including limitations, to be applied to local fishing operations and the amount of fishing.
- Specify the information and data required to be provided by persons
- Take into account relevant traditional fishing methods and practices including management systems and strategies.

### 1.8. Key Guiding Principles

The development of this Plan will be guided by the following principles:

- Consultative approach
- ecosystem approach to fisheries
- consultative approach
- community-based approach<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Based on community collaboration and participation in managing, monitoring and maintaining fisheries resources, also empowerment of food security can occur, equitably managed of resources by ensuring that the fishery don't end up with a select few benefits from resources, also CBM approach aims for a sustainable fishery, which is not driven by the overarching desire for profit, as a result the community will responsible for managing the fisheries resources, balance the needs for production and conservation with results in sustainability

## PART 2: AUTHORITY AND ROLES

The Minister of Fisheries, authorized by the Fisheries Management Act 2002, shall manage the fishery in cooperation with stakeholders and communities through a co-management approach. Co-management facilitates the sharing of information, promotion of voluntary compliance, and active engagement/participation to assist with monitoring the fishery as well as adopt the fisheries management plan.

The Ministry of Fisheries is responsible for promoting conservation, management, sustainable utilization and development of fisheries resources in the Kingdom of Tonga, which includes its coastal fisheries resources.

This plan also acknowledges different stakeholders within the fishery and Coastal Fisheries Management Committee and their respective roles in co-managing the fishery.

## PART 3: COMMENCEMENT AND REVIEW

The Plan is effective from the date of endorsement by the Minister of Fisheries. There is an Annual Operational Plan, that is developed from this Plan's priorities to designate the actions to be undertaken in that year. The progress of implementing this Plan shall be reported in the Annual Report of the Ministry of Fisheries.

The mid-review of the Plan will take place in 2024 and any recommended amendments will be made and approved by CEO. The full review of the Plan will take place before the end of the plan in 2026.

## PART 4: OVERVIEW OF THE FISHERY

The Kingdom of Tonga has 177 islands with total land area of 747 km<sup>2</sup>, and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of around 700,000km<sup>2</sup>, making the EEZ roughly one hundred times the size of land area with a total coastline of 429 km. The population of Tonga is increasing rapidly, coupled with an increasing rate of unemployment. As such, most families resort to harvesting marine resources as a means to support their families, both financially and for daily consumption.

Most households depend on coastal fisheries resources, despite the threats to these resources in Tonga. In areas close to urban centers, declining coastal fisheries resources are evident. The decline of coastal fisheries resources is intensified by unsustainable practices to compensate people's income. This is ultimately leading to the collapse of important ecosystems.

External threats to coastal fishery resources include:

- Population growth;
- Natural disasters (e.g., cyclones, volcanic eruptions);
- Climate change (sea surface temperature rises and acidification);
- Pollution; and
- Coastal development and associated coastal runoff and siltation.

Due to the threats mentioned above, recent assessment of fish stocks has indicated that Tonga can expect to experience significant shortfall in its coastal fish supply, if coastal fisheries are not managed well. The challenges in coastal fisheries in Tonga require multipronged management approaches where clear and enforceable fisheries rules and regulations are applied. The coastal fisheries sector needs to adapt and respond to these external pressures to mitigate their impacts as part of a broader policy response.

In addition, recent surveys suggest that the coastal fisheries resources of Tonga are moderately to seriously overexploited, with significant declines in abundance of some species and decreases in size for others. The current exploitation of these ecosystems affects coastal fisheries sustainability, and this anthropogenic pressure requires urgent attention.

In Tonga, coastal fisheries activities include net fishing, establishing fish fences, trolling, line fishing, spear fishing and hand gathering in the inter-tidal areas, lagoon, reefs and coastal waters for a wide range of species. The coastal fisheries resources are currently managed through an open access arrangement, meaning anyone can take fish for food, or for sale, and there are very few rules to control the fishing that occurs. As such, the fishery is under significant pressure and some species such as mullet, turtle and giant clam are already overfished.



Coastal fisheries resources are vital to our people, providing healthy food, supporting livelihoods and generating revenues for local communities and national economies. Both fish and invertebrate species form the basis of a Tongan diet, and pressures on these limited resources and coastal habitat can easily impact their sustainability and ecosystems. Coral reefs across Tonga are showing signs of stress such as bleaching, disease, and increased coral breakage. The fish biomass for these reefs is low in comparison to healthy sites across the South Pacific, and there is widespread evidence of a phase shift towards algal communities. Target fish species are decreasing in catch size which impacts not only these species but the food chains reliant on their presence.

## PART 5: OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

This plan contains six objectives supported by 20 strategies. It is intended that the effective implementation of the 20 strategies will contribute to achieving the five objectives and the overall goal of the plan. This table forms the key element of the plan.

Objectives	STRATEGIES
1. To ensure that coastal fisheries resources are sustainable, and all coastal fisheries activities have minimal impacts on the marine and coastal environments.	<p><b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Ensure all small-scale vessels are registered and licensed</p> <p><b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Enforce fishing gear control, species limitation and seasonal closure according to coastal communities' regulations</p> <p><b>Strategy 1.3:</b> Increase transparency on the information available for the state of stocks, licensing processes and management approaches.</p> <p><b>Strategy 1.4:</b> Develop species specific management and development plans, prioritising endangered species.</p> <p><b>Strategy 1.5:</b> Annually review Tonga Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Plan 2022-2025.</p> <p><b>Strategy 1.6:</b> Develop initiatives to support coastal fisheries resource management</p>

	<b>Strategy 1.7:</b> Develop complementary sustainable livelihood initiatives
<b>2.</b> To maximize sustainable economic returns, and improve food security and livelihoods of the communities of Tonga from coastal fisheries.	<p><b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Investigate and initiate market research (domestic and international) on fish markets to support the coastal communities</p> <p><b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Encourage the establishment of fishing community councils</p> <p><b>Strategy 2.3:</b> Collaborate with donors to establish fish markets in coastal communities</p> <p><b>Strategy 2.4:</b> Undertake fishing associations and council's capacity building</p> <p><b>Strategy 2.5:</b> Improved coordination and sharing harvesting operators and market information to maximize prices and facilitate control</p>
<b>3.</b> To strengthen the coastal fisheries resources monitoring programme, to collect fisheries information and valuable scientific knowledge on key species.	<p><b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Expand resource assessment and monitoring activities to provide adequate information to inform fisheries management</p> <p><b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Collaborate with CROP agencies (SPC, FFA, SPREP, USP, PIDP), FAO and universities to build Ministry's knowledge</p>
<b>4.</b> To build and develop the capacity of the Ministry of Fisheries to research, manage, develop and monitor coastal fisheries resources.	<p><b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Implement capacity-building activities related to the development of management plan.</p> <p><b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Fisheries to monitor and enforce relevant management regimes</p>

5. To enhance the capacity of Tongan communities to respond effectively to climate change.	<b>Strategy 5.1:</b> Conduct pre-feasibility studies on effects of Climate change impacts and adaptation <b>Strategy 5.2</b> Raise awareness and build communities capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change on coastal fisheries.
6. To enhance engagement and cooperative management of coastal fisheries resources	<b>Strategy 6.1:</b> Regularly engage and communicate with MoF divisions <b>Strategy 6.2:</b> Continue collaboration and engagement with external stakeholder (line agencies, women's groups, fishing associations, environmental groups, Community Fishing Committees)

## PART 6: MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The following management measures are integrated in this Plan as specific controls to regulate impacts on coastal fisheries resources.

### 1. Licences and Permits:

In order to monitor and control the fishery activities, licences or permits are required for the following fishing gears:

#### 1.1 Net

- 1.1.1 No person shall use a net for fishing except with a licence issued by the CEO and in accordance with such conditions as they may specify.
- 1.1.2 A net license shall be valid for a period of one year from date of issuance. An application for new or renewal of license shall be done in accordance with process provided in the applicable regulation. Unless otherwise recommended in this Plan, the applicable conservation and management measures in the Fisheries Management (Conservation) Regulation 2008 shall remain.
- 1.1.3 Following are the recommend maximum length, mesh size and fees for each of the following nets:



	Type of Net	Nets shall not exceed the following maximum length (m)	Mesh size (mm)	Fees (\$)	License renewal fee
1	Drive-in Net	300	Not less than 50mm	300	\$10
3	Entangling net	300	Not less than 50mm	300	\$10
4	Drag net/Beach Seine net	300	Not less than 50mm	300	\$10
4	Ring net	300	Not less than 50mm	300	\$10
5	Lift net /purseine net	300	Not less than 50mm	300	\$10
6	Kupenga Kaloama ( <i>Mulloidichthys flavolineatus</i> )	100	Less than 50mm	100	\$10
7	Kupenga Ihe ( <i>Belone belone</i> )	100	Less than 50mm	100	\$10
8	Turtle net	300	Not less than 300mm	300	\$10

### **1.2 Export license for commercial purposes**

1.2.1 A valid export license is required for any person who exports finfishes, sea urchin, sea hares or arch clams for commercial purposes. Exporting giant clam and trochus are prohibited.

1.2.2 A license to export fish for commercial purposes shall be accompanied by a valid license to operate a fish processing establishment.

1.2.3 The maximum number of export licenses is Six (6). Allocation of the export license to each island groups in Tonga is provided in the table below.

Island groups	Number of the export license
Tongatapu	3
Vava'u	2
Ha'apai	1
'Eua	0
Niuaatoputapu, Niuafo'ou	0

### **1.3 Personal Export**

1.3.1 Any airline passenger carrying fish for home consumption must have a personal export permit issued by the CEO.

1.3.2 The personal export permit may only allow a maximum of 20 kilograms of fish per airline passenger, subject to the following limits per species:

- i) sea hares not exceeding 10kg in quantity
- ii) sea urchins not exceeding 5kg in quantity
- ii) ark clams not exceeding 5kg in quantity
- iii) finfish not exceeding 20kg in quantity

## **2. Export limits for coastal fisheries resources.**

2.1 Specific export limits and resource rent for coastal fisheries resources are provided in the table below:

Species common name	Species Tonga name	Commercial export limits (kgs/qrt)	Home consumption export limits (kg/shipment)	Resource Rent
Sea urchin	Tukumisi	50kgs/qrt	5kg/shipment	\$15 per kg (*1%)
Sea hares	Muli'one	50kg/qrt	10kg/shipment	\$15 per kg (*1%)

Arch clams	Kaloa'a	20kg/qrt	5kg/shipment	\$15 per kg (*1%)
Finfishes	Ika	No limit	20kg person	-

### **3. Fishing Methods**

#### **3.1 Mesh Sizes**

3.1.1 The mesh sizes -

- a) of a cast net used for fishing shall not be less than 12 millimetres and the diameter of such a net shall not exceed 4 meters.
- b) of any trammel net, dragnet or beach seine net, gill net, drive-in net, ring net, lift net or purse seine net used for fishing shall not be less than 50 millimetres.
- c) for any net using to fish for a particular species such as goatfish and garfish may be less than 50mm
- d) for any turtle net, it shall not be less than 300 millimetres.

3.1.2 No person shall sell or purchase a net with a mesh size that is inconsistent with this regulation.

#### **3.2 Length of the nets**

3.2.1 The length of -

- a) a drive-in net including ropes or scare lines attached to the drive-in net used for fishing shall not be greater than 300 metres.
- b) any trammel net, dragnet or beach-seine net, ring net, lift net or purse seine net, used for fishing shall not be greater than 300 metres. Le
- c) goatfish net used for fishing shall not be greater than 100 metres.
- d) garfish net used for fishing shall not be greater than 100 metres.

#### **3.3 Prohibitions in net fishing**

3.3.1 No person shall –



- i) use any net, except a cast net, to fish within 200 metres of a fish fence, or
- ii) use any net within 100 meters from the boundary of any SMA; or
- iii) use more than one net at any one time.

3.3.2 Any person using any net must be beyond 100m of any SMA boundary.

#### **3.4 Prohibition in fish fence**

3.4.1 In this management plan, the distance from one fish fence to another will be measured from the midpoint of the leading fence of the fish fence.

3.4.2 No person shall erect or use a fish fence the:

- i) mesh of which is less than 3.8 centimeters;
- ii) width of which at its widest point exceeds 50 meters;
- iii) total installed length of which exceeds 140 meters.

3.4.3 There shall not be more than three fish traps within each fish fence.

3.4.4 The leading fish fence shall be 15 meters away from the end edge of the high-water mark to enable free passage of small vessels and local fishers.

3.4.5 No fish fence shall be erected:

- i) within 600 meters of another fish fence;
- ii) within 500 meters of any Government wharf;
- iii) within 200 meters of any SMA.

3.4.6 All fish fence shall be removed during the closed season of mullet from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July.

#### **4. Vessels, fishing gear and Fishers Registration**

4.1 All small-scale fishing vessels used for subsistence and commercial fishing must be registered with the Ministry of Fisheries.

4.2 No person shall use a cast net for fishing unless registered with the Ministry of Fisheries.

4.3 Any small-scale fishers undertaking commercial and subsistence fishing must be registered with the Ministry of Fisheries.

4.4 The fisher must submit a complete information registration form to the CEO for registering a fisher. The CEO, upon receipt of complete information in a registration form, register a fisher in the Fishers Register.

4.5 There shall be no fee for registration of fishers in this regulation.

## **5. Restrictions**

### **5.1 Giant Clam** (*Tridacna spp*)

5.1.1 No person shall -

a) fish for, harm, possess, sell or purchase any giant clam the shell length of which is less than the length specified for the particular species indicated in the table in 5.1.2.

b) remove the mantle or adductor muscle from any giant clam the shell length of which is less than the length specified for the particular species indicated in the table below.

Local Name	Scientific Name	Minimum size of shell length (centimetres)
Tokanoa molemole	<i>Tridacna derasa</i>	26
Matahele	<i>Tridacna squamosa</i>	18
Kukukuku	<i>Tridacna maxima</i>	15.5
Saieniti	<i>Tridacna gigas</i>	50
Toki	<i>Tridacna devoroo</i>	26

c) sell giant clam meat out of the shell unless it has been certified by an authorised officer that it came from a clam of legal size.

d) trade more than 5 giant clam shells internationally for souvenir purposes (upon provision of required documents to meet Legal Acquisition Findings – LAF).

5.1.2 Notwithstanding any other provision in the Act, no person shall export any giant clam meat for commercial or home consumption purposes.

## **5.2 Wing pearl oyster**

5.2.1 No person shall -

a) fish, harm, possess, sell or purchase any winged pearl oyster which less than 20 centimetres in ambro-ventral length.

b) harvest wing pearl oyster from the wild without the authorization from the CEO for Ministry of Fisheries.

## **5.3 Sea Turtles**

5.3.1 No person shall -

a) at any time, fish, possess, capture or destroy any female turtle.

b) take, possess, sell or purchase any loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricate*) meat locally, during the open season out of the shell, unless it has been certified by an authorised officer that it came from a turtle of legal size and it is not female turtle.

c) disturb, take, have in their possession, sell or purchase any turtle eggs.

d) interfere with, destroy, or disturb in any way any turtle nest.

e) use a spear or spear gun for the purpose of capturing, killing or taking any species of turtle.

f) at any time fish, capture, possess, sell, purchase or destroy any male turtle species the length of which is less than size limits below:

	Turtle species	Legal size limit (centimetres)
<i>Turtle</i>	Olive ridley	66
	Green	108
	Loggerhead	100
	Hawksbill	76
	Leatherback	No take

g) fish for, capture, possess, sell, purchase, or destroy any turtle during the closed season 1<sup>st</sup> August – 28<sup>th</sup> February.

h) trade shells of turtles internationally for any purposes (unless prove to meet the LAF requirements and such)

#### **5.4 Octopus**

5.4.1 No person shall –

a) use destructive techniques to dig octopus from their burrows.

b) fish, take, possess, sell or purchase any Octopus, the length of which is less than 60cm in measuring from top of the head to the tips of the legs.

#### **5.5 Ark Clams**

5.5.1 No person shall fish, take, possess, sell or purchase any ark clams, the length of which is less than 4.5 centimetres.

#### **5.6 Fish**

5.6.1 No person shall fish, take, possess, sell or purchase any fish, the length of which is less than the length specified in the species size limits table below.



### 5.7 Mud crab (*Scylla serrata*)

5.7.1 No person shall –

- a) fish, take, possess, sell or purchase any mud crab, the width of carapace is less than 12 centimetres.
- b) take, possess, sell or purchase any mud crab carrying eggs.

### 5.8 Sea Urchin

5.8.1 No person shall fish, capture, possess, sell or purchase sea urchin from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> November every year.

## 6. Species Size Limits

Size limits are a management tool that regulates the catch of target species. Often such limits are set for a species of concern as a conservation measure and can be effective if set for the most commonly caught species within a fishery.

Scientific names	Tongan Name	Minimum size limit (in centimetres)
<i>Acanthurus triostegus</i>	Manini	17
<i>Ctenochaetus striatus</i>	Pone 'uli	17
<i>Naso hexacanthus</i>	Ume atu	54
<i>Naso lituratus</i>	Ume lei	22
<i>Naso lopezi</i>	Ume atu	32
<i>Naso unicornis</i>	Ume/'Ume kaki	32
<i>Lethrinus xanthochilus</i>	Ngungutoa	43
<i>Lethrinus obsoletus</i>	Tanutanu	24
<i>Lethrinus nebulous</i>	Koango/'Ika hina	41

<i>Lethrinus harak</i>	Tanutanu	22
<i>Lethrinus olivaceus</i>	Ngutukao/Ngutuloloa	43
<i>Hipposcarus longiceps</i>	Olomea	32
<i>Leptoscarus vaigiensis</i>	Ufu	21
<i>Scarus ghobban</i>	Hohomo	41
<i>Scarus globiceps</i>	Hohomo	29
<i>Scarus schlegeli</i>	Hohomo	26
<i>Bolbometopon muricatum</i>	Sikatoki	69
<i>Chlorurus microrhinos</i>	Sikatoki	45
<i>Siganus argenteus</i>	Ma'ava	20
<i>Siganus fuscenscens</i>	Ma'ava	20
<i>Siganus vermiculatus</i>	Pongongo	25
<i>Siganus spinus</i>	oo	14
<i>Winged pearl oyster</i>	Tofe Siapani	20
Turtle	Olive ridley	66
	Green	108
	Loggerhead	100
	Hawksbill	76
	Leatherback	No take
<i>Arch clams (kaloaá)</i>	Kaloaá	4.5
<i>Octopus</i>	Feke	60
<i>mudcrab</i>	Paka	12 (carapace)

## 7. Closed Season

7.1 Sea urchin shall be prohibited for harvest from 1<sup>st</sup> October – 30<sup>th</sup> November.

7.2 Mullet shall be prohibited for harvest from 1<sup>st</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> July.

## PART 7: COMPLIANCE

Compliance includes monitoring, control, surveillance, and enforcement (MCS&E) activities undertaken by MOF. These activities ensure compliance with the management measures, using a balance between education and enforcement, and identifying potential risks.

The Ministry's Compliance Division will ensure compliance with all management measures. MoF will exercise their roles to monitor fishing activities, inspect vessels, and ensure compliance of license holders.

In cases of non-compliant activity, MoF will follow a Standard Operating Procedure **"TOHI FAKAHINOHINO 'O E FOUNGA FAKAHOKO NGAUE KI HE TOUTAI TA'EFKALAO Í HE TOUTAI MAMAHA"** to improve behaviour and ensure compliance with this Plan.

## PART 8: IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation Plan was prepared in close collaboration with MOF's Heads of Divisions. It provides a guide for MoF in the effective and timely implementation of this plan. It is subject to regular review to ensure the necessary attention and reallocation of resources for effective implementation.

The Implementation Plan will outline activities/tasks, who is responsible for each activity, resources required, timeline and possible risks to delivery.

## PART 9: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an important part of the successful implementation of this plan. It provides the opportunity to ensure that activities implemented are achieving the expected outcomes (monitoring) and answering the question of are we doing the right thing? (evaluation).

MOF has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan based on the Implementation Plan and is used for the monitoring and evaluating the progress of implementing the Plan.

## PART 10: APPENDIX

### List of Appendices

1. Implementation Schedule
2. Fish Size limits



## APPENDIX I

### TONGA COASTAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023 – 2026

#### IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Objective	Strategy	Actions	Performance Indicator	Responsible Division	Timeline
1. To ensure that the coastal fishery is sustainable, and all coastal fisheries activities have minimal impacts on the marine and coastal environments	1.1 Ensure all small-scale vessels are registered and licensed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register all small-scale fishing vessels used for subsistence fishing</li> <li>All small-scale fishing vessels used for commercial fishing must be licensed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of small-scale fishing vessels registered.</li> <li>Number of small-scale fishing vessels licensed.</li> </ul>	FCD/Licensing Section	Ongoing
	1.2 Enforce fishing gear control, species limitation and seasonal closure according to coastal communities' regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct educational programmes using awareness materials relevant to fishing gear control, species limitation and seasonal closure.</li> <li>Develop Compliance plans, procedures and activities, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of awareness materials on fishing gear control, species limitation and seasonal closure are developed.</li> <li>A compliance plan is developed,</li> </ul>	FCD/Enforcement Section	Ongoing

## APPENDIX I

	consistently execute them	approved and implemented.	FCD/Enforcement Section	Annually
1.3 Increase transparency on the information available for the state of stocks, licensing processes and management approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, publish and translate reports on state of stocks, licensing processes and management approaches.</li> <li>Conduct awareness programmes about state of stock, licensing processes and management approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of reports published and translated</li> <li>Number of pamphlets, posters developed and distributed</li> <li>Number of awareness programmes conducted.</li> </ul>		
1.4 Develop species specific management and development plans prioritising endangered species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce and implement species specific fisheries management plans including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trochus</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of management plan developed and approved</li> </ul>	FMDD/Planning Section	Annually

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fish spawning aggregation</li> <li>• Conduct feasibility studies (resources and economic assessment) on a selection of species/fishery, including species covered by CITES.</li> <li>• Review management systems to aid stock recovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility studies reports completed and approved.</li> <li>• Number of reports on reviewing of the management system to aid stock recovery</li> </ul>		
1.5 Annually review Tonga Coastal Fisheries Management and Development Plan 2023-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the TCFMDP quarterly</li> <li>• Conduct mid-review of the TCFMDP beginning February 2024</li> <li>• Conduct full-review of the TCFMDP beginning August 2026.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of performance reports submitted and approved.</li> <li>• Number of mid-review report.</li> <li>• Number of Full-review report.</li> </ul>	FMDD/Planning Section	Annually



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review report completed, submitted and approved.</li> </ul>		
1.6 Develop initiatives to support coastal fisheries resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translocation of giant clams from high to low density sites</li> <li>Construct, deploy and maintain coastal FADs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of translocation of giant clams each year.</li> <li>Number of FADs deployed per year.</li> </ul>	FSD/Aquatic Biosecurity  FSD/Inshore resources section	Annually
1.7 Development of complementary sustainable livelihood initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate, using cost benefit analysis, appropriate alternative sustainable livelihood activities that complement management</li> <li>Identify value-added initiatives (post-harvest)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of cost-benefit analysis reports completed</li> <li>Number of value-added initiatives implemented.</li> </ul>	FMDD/Economic Section	



## APPENDIX I

2. To maximize sustainable economic returns and improve food security and livelihoods of the communities of Tonga from coastal fisheries.	2.1 Investigate and initiate Market Research (Domestic and International) on fish markets to support the coastal communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a market research plan</li> <li>Trial the export of new marine products from coastal fisheries</li> <li>Identify new markets for coastal fisheries products each year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of market research plan approved.</li> <li>Number of new marine products trial for export.</li> <li>Number of domestic/international market report submitted.</li> <li>Number of new markets identified for coastal fisheries products each year</li> <li>Domestic/International market report submitted to HOD</li> </ul>	FMDD/Economic Section	Annually
	2.2 Encourage the establishment of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the fishing councils and associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of community fishing council established</li> </ul>	FMDD/Economic Section	Annually

## APPENDIX I

	fishing community councils		and supported per year.	FMDD/Economic Section	Annually
	2.3 Collaborate with donors and communities councils to establish fish markets in coastal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build fish markets in coastal communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of fish market established per year.</li> </ul>		
	2.4 Undertake fishing associations and council's capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct marketing trainings</li> <li>Facilitate women fish processors and traders' associations to access micro-credit financial schemes.</li> <li>Provide support to stakeholders to access the micro-credit options /funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of training conducted per year.</li> <li>Number of association established at the national, district and community levels.</li> <li>Amount of credit made available to micro-credit from government sources</li> </ul>		

## APPENDIX I

	2.5 Improved coordination and sharing harvesting operators and market information to maximize prices and facilitate control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop market value reports or market chain-value assessments for harvesters</li> </ul>	Number of market value reports or market chain-value assessments for harvesters	FMDD/Economic Section	Annually
3. To strengthen the coastal fisheries resources monitoring programme, to collect fisheries information and valuable scientific knowledge on key species.	3.1 Expand resource assessment and monitoring activities to provide adequate information to inform fisheries management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct resources assessment on key targeted species</li> <li>Develop a Non-Detriment Findings (NDF) for CITES-listed species wild population</li> <li>Conduct population study for coastal species under the CITES listed species</li> <li>Conduct periodic surveys (Creel/Market/socio-economic)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of resource assessment conducted.</li> <li>Number of population study conducted.</li> <li>Number of survey completed.</li> <li>Number of database set up.</li> <li>Number of simplified and robust collection schemes established</li> </ul>	FSD/Inshore Resources Section FSD/Aquatic Biosecurity FSD/Inshore Resources section	Annually

	(Catch return forms, logbooks)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data storage and management (databases)</li> <li>• Improve data collection systems for inshore fisheries</li> </ul>			
3.2 Collaboration with CROP agencies (SPC, FFA, SPREP, USP, PIDP), FAO and universities to build Ministry's knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish training /working programs on specific areas, including fisheries surveys design, data collection and analysis (scientific, social and economic), fisheries management and policies development and fisheries statistics.</li> <li>• Develop partnership strategies with key agencies including NGOs and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of collaborative programs undertaken</li> <li>• Number of MOU established</li> <li>• Data sharing agreement or MOU specific to this action developed.</li> </ul>	FSD/Inshore resources section, FMDD  Annually



## APPENDIX I

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve data collection and sharing by and between MoF and MORC</li> </ul>		
<b>4. To build and develop the capacity of the Ministry of Fisheries to research, manage, develop and monitor coastal fisheries resources</b>	<b>4.1 Implement capacity-building activities related to the development of management plans.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carryout need assessment for Staff</li> <li>Complete activities to better understand management approaches for coastal fisheries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need assessment report submitted per year</li> <li>Number of capacity building activities developed for staffs.</li> </ul>	FMDD/Planning Section FMDD/Planning Section Annually
	<b>4.2 Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Fisheries to monitor and enforce relevant management regimes.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop training needs analysis (with priorities)</li> <li>Source or identify programmes to build appropriate skills with in the division</li> <li>Implement effective enforcement protocols and procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of training developed and conducted.</li> <li>Number of training sessions conducted.</li> <li>Number of staff receiving training on enforcement protocols and procedures.</li> </ul>	FMDD/Planning Section Compliance (Enforcement) / Annually

## APPENDIX I

5. To enhance the capacity of Tongan communities to respond effectively to climate change.	5.1 Conduct pre-feasibility studies on effects of climate change impacts and adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop climate change information packages in relation to coastal fisheries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of information package complete and widely distributed.</li> </ul>	FMDD/Planning Section	Annually
	5.2 Raise awareness and build communities capacity to adapt to the impact of climate change on coastal fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement community adaptation programme</li> <li>Collaboration with national, regional partners and donors in implementing climate change adaptation activities</li> <li>Conduct public awareness and education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least one adaptation programme initiated in communities</li> <li>Number of collaborations with international partners.</li> <li>Number of awareness and training programs produced and released out to the coastal communities.</li> </ul>	FMDD/Planning and Policy Section	

## APPENDIX I

6. To enhance engagement and cooperative management of coastal fisheries resources	Strategy 6.1: Regularly engage and communicate with MoF divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold information sharing meetings with divisions quarterly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of informal meetings conducted</li> </ul>	FMDD
	Strategy 6.2: Continue collaboration and engagement with external stakeholder (line agencies, women's groups, fishing associations, environmental groups, community fishing committees)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct informal meetings with Community Fishing Committees</li> <li>Utilized quarterly bulletin to collaborate with line agencies and ministries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of information sharing meetings conducted</li> <li>Number of quarterly bulletins shared.</li> </ul>	FMDD/FCD/FSD

## FISH SIZE LIMITS

## A. Acanthuridae

Acanthurid species are surgeonfish, tangs or unicornfish, and are commonly caught in Tonga's fisheries. These fish are herbivorous on coral reefs, with different species grazing both surface algae and macroalgae. Their role in the ecosystem, along with other herbivorous reef fish, maintains coral health against increasing algal coverage. Below are the size limits for the selected Acanthurid species with Tongan names included.



Manini - *Acanthurus triostegus*  
17cm



Pone 'uli - *Ctenochaetus striatus*  
17cm



'Ume atu - *Naso hexacanthus*  
54cm



'Ume lei - *Naso lituratus*  
22cm



'Ume atu - *Naso lopezi*  
32cm



'Ume/'Ume kaki - *Naso unicornis*  
32cm



## B. Lethrinidae

Lethrinidae is the family of emperors and bream, important predators in inshore habitats and coral reefs. Species in this family are diverse in Tonga's fisheries, and target species are very common. They feed on mostly invertebrates and small fish, but are important to maintaining balance of their prey species in the ecosystem as well as controlling invertebrate populations. Below are proposed size limits for the selected Lethrinid species. Local names are included, with one species absent of a Tongan name.



Ngungutoa - *Lethrinus xanthochilus*  
43cm



*Lethrinus obsoletus*  
24cm



Koango/'Ika hina - *Lethrinus nebulosus*  
41cm



Tanutanu - *Lethrinus harak*  
22cm



Ngutukao/Ngutuloloa - *Lethrinus olivaceus*  
43cm



### C. Scaridae

The Scarids are the parrotfishes, very important herbivores to the ecology of coral reefs. Parrotfish form the basis of herbivore dynamics in their habitat, browsing on the majority of algae that compete with corals in their environment. Below are proposed size limits



**Male**



**Female**

**Olomea - *Hipposcarus longiceps*  
32cm**



**Male**



**Female**

**'Ufu - *Leptoscarus vaigiensis*  
21cm**

## APPENDIX II



Male



Female

Hohomo - *Scarus ghobban*  
41cm



Male



Female

Hohomo - *Scarus globiceps*  
29cm



Male



Female

Hohomo - *Scarus schlegali*  
26cm



Male



Female

Sikatoki - *Bolbometopon muricatum*  
69cm



Male



Female

Sikatoki - *Chlorurus microrhinos*  
45cm

**D. Siganidae**

Siganid species are known as rabbitfish or spinefoots, and are commonly caught in Tonga's fisheries. These species are very common in Tonga's fisheries, but are being harvested at sizes too small for individuals to reproduce. Below are the proposed size limit with the Tongan names.



**Ma'ava - *Siganus argenteus***  
**20cm**



**Ma'ava - *Siganus fuscus***  
**20cm**

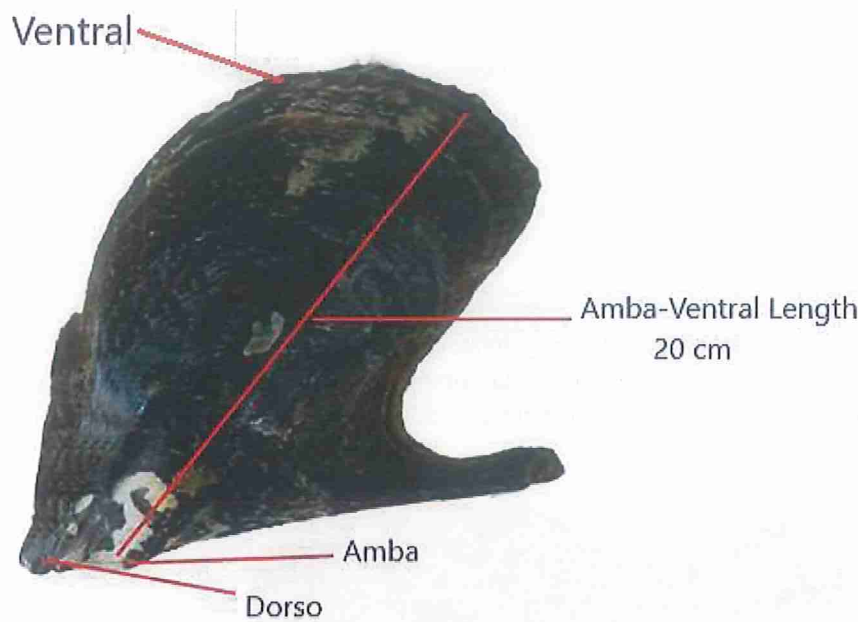


**O - *Siganus vermiculatus***  
**25cm**



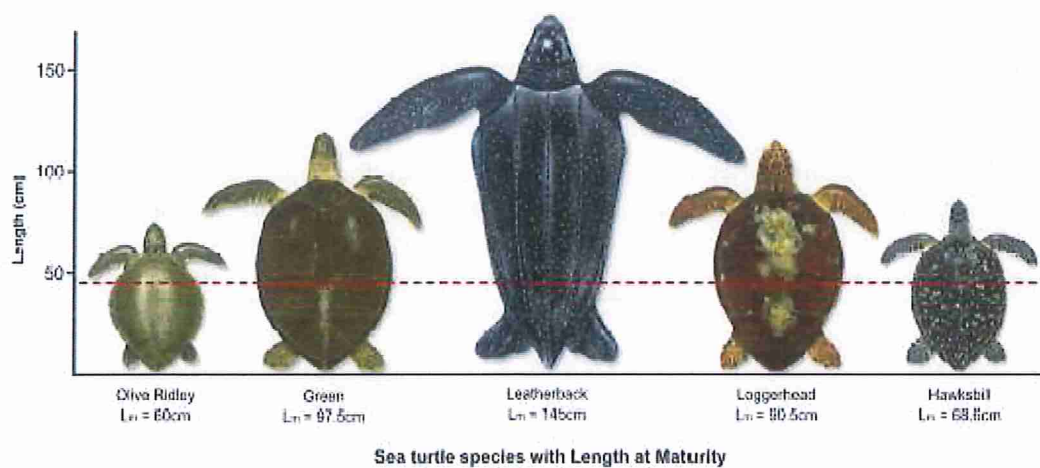
**O - *Siganus spinus***  
**14cm**

E. Winged Pearl Oyster



F. Sea Turtles (*Fonu*)

All turtle species are listed in CITES Appendix 1 prohibiting international trade in specimens or parts of these species. Currently, Tonga allows for male turtles of all species, except for the Leatherback turtle (*Fonu-leta*), to be caught domestically provided their carapace length is above 45cm. However, there is new size limit proposed on the table below for each species.

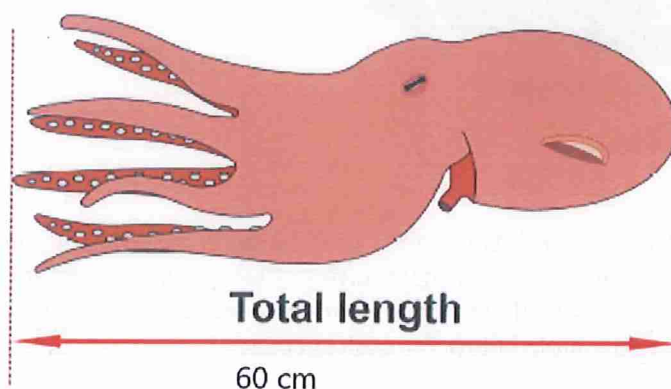


Sea Turtle Species	Length
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Olive Ridley	Ln= 66cm
Green	Ln= 108 cm
Loggorhead	Ln= 100cm
Hawksbill	Ln=76cm
Leatherback	No take

#### G. Octopodidae (Feke)

There are numerous octopus species inhabiting Tonga's inshore habitats. The three most common species reported are *Octopus cyanea* (big blue octopus, day octopus) which can grow to 80cm from the top of the head to the tips of the legs when outstretched as in the figure below.

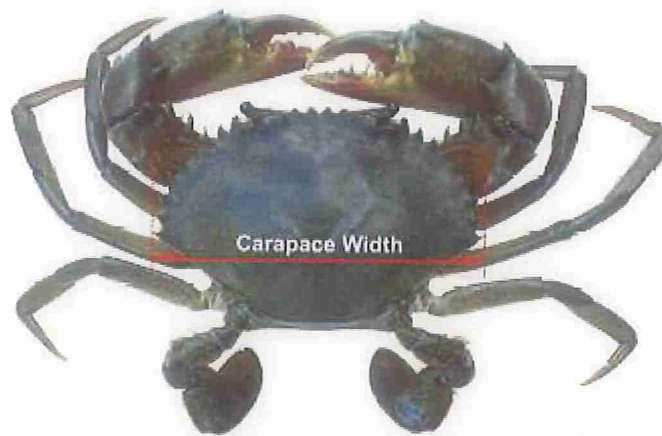


#### H. Mud Crabs (Tolitol)

##### 4.1.Scylla

Species in the genus *Scylla* are commonly known as mud crabs and are found across the Indo-Pacific. There are four known species of which *Scylla serrata* (Giant mud crab) is the most common.





12 cm carapace

#### I. Ark Clams (*Kaloa'a*)

Ark clams are a family of bivalves which represent an important food stock for coastal communities. *Anadara antiquata* or Kaloa'a, is commonly harvested for both subsistence and commercial purposes, but this fishery represents a major food source during poor weather when it is difficult to catch fish, particularly during the storm season. As such the size limit is suggested below.

