



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

FIRST QUARTER JANUARY — MARCH 2005



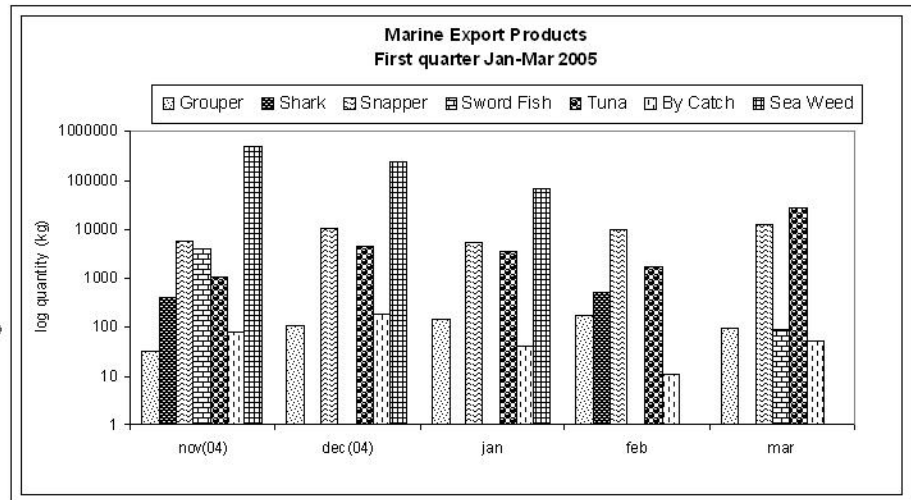
MARINE EXPORTS

During the first quarter 2005 a total of 28 tonnes of Snapper and 32 tonnes of Tuna were exported from Tonga.

The export quantity of Tuna has increased by 80% since the fourth quarter 2004 and Snapper increased by 14% in comparison

A small amount of sword fish, other by-catch species and sharkfin were exported during this quarter and accounted for 0.5% export quantity.

Harvesting of seaweed was not conducted in this first quarter, The consignment of seaweed in January was harvested in 2004.

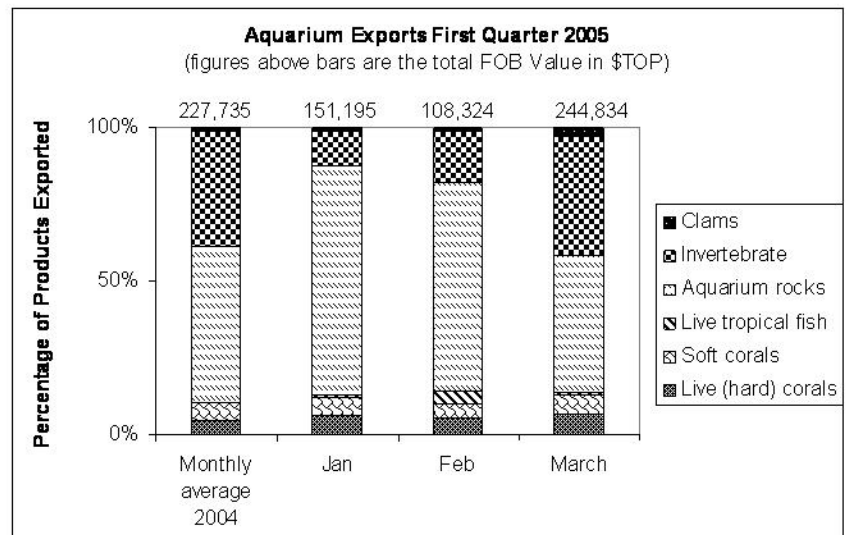


AQUARIUM FISHERY

Live rocks are Tonga's leading export products in Aquarium fishery. The average export value of the Aquarium products is \$100,000 pa'anga (*FOB value) for each of the reported months. The value of invertebrates exported increased towards the end of the quarter by 59%.

A reduced number of available skilled divers is one of the possible factors contributed to the reduced in total catch of exported live fish.

Giant clams exports depend very much on the cultured animals from the Ministry's Aquaculture and Research Centre in Sopo.



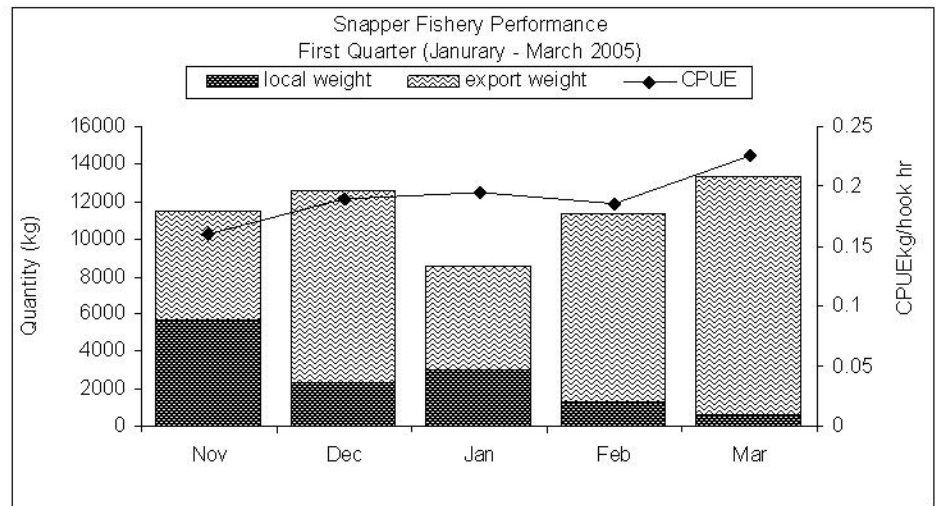
* FOB = Free On Board, describes a price which includes goods plus the services at the time of offloading from the vessel at first landing

SNAPPER FISHERY

10 out of 26 boats licensed snapper fishing vessels were actively fishing during the first quarter of 2005. The total catch landed at Tu'imatamoana wharf increased towards the end of the this quarter.

The catch rate (kg/hook hr) steadily increased towards the end of the quarter. Catch per unit effort (CPUE) increased considerably when compared with the previous months of 2004.

The total export quantity also increased toward the end of the quarter while the locally consumed quantity dropped steadily.



TUNA FISHERY

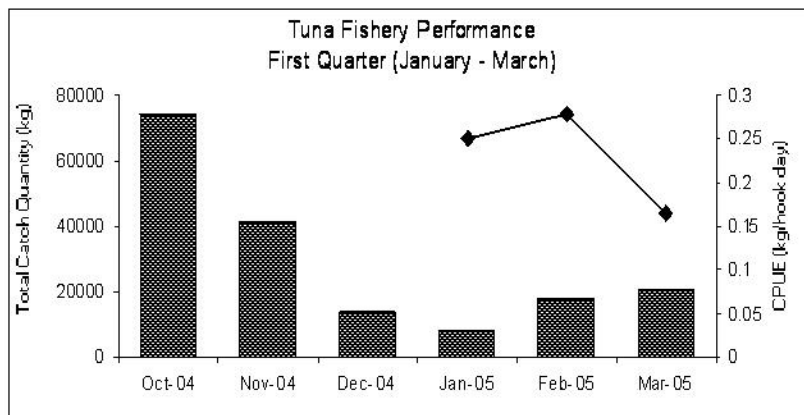
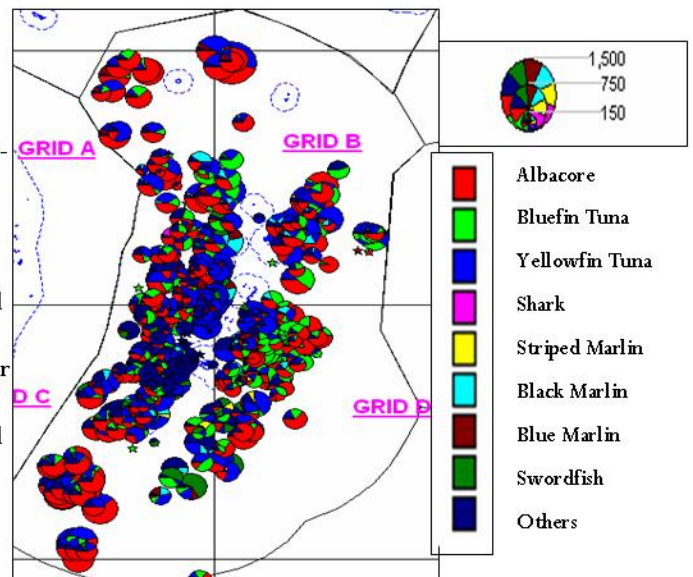
The total landing of Tuna has steadily increased through out this quarter as compared with the steep fall of the last quarter 2004.

It is believed that base on the El'Nino long consequences the recruitment and migration of Tuna species have left the stock uneconomically viable, forcing the withdrawal of the foreign based vessels at the end of the last quarter 2004 towards the beginning the first quarter 2005.

The catch in this quarter was dominated by Big eye Tuna followed by Albacore while the catch of Yellow fin Tuna dropped. The observed shift in species composition of catch can be accounted for by a difference in the species targeted by the locally based fleet when compared to the foreign based vessels, that have now ceased fishing in Tongan waters.

The catch rate (kg/hook hr) dropped considerably towards the end of the quarter.

Tuna Catch Distribution, First Quarter 2005



The Ministry of Fisheries is moving to keep a closer eye on the status of the Tuna fish stock in Tonga's Exclusive Economic Zone.

Information is received by the Ministry of Fisheries from log sheets completed by the fishers is combined with catch recorded at landing and validated with the positions picked by the Vessels Monitoring System. This information is used to analyze the catch characteristics and fishing behavior.

The figure above shows the Tuna catch and distribution for the first quarter, January to March 2005.