

# PRESS RELEASE

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FISH AGEING OTOLITH WORKSHOP

**[Wellington, New Zealand, 20 – 24 February 2023]**- The National Institute of Water and Atmosphere Research held two practical workshops on Data Analysis and Fish Ageing Otolith at its Wellington campus in New Zealand on the 20 – 24 February, 2023. The NIWA aims to manage and develop deepwater fisheries, and to enhance the economic value and sustainable management of our aquatic resources and environments. The CEO for the Ministry of Fisheries Dr. Tu'ikolongahau Halafihi led Tonga's delegation to the Data Analysis and Fish Ageing Otolith Workshop, accompanied by Mr. Poasi Ngaluafe (Deputy CEO for Fisheries Science Division), Lavinia Vaipuna (Head of Offshore Fisheries Section), Viliami Fatongiatau (Head of Inshore Fisheries Section) and Makeleta Malimali (Fisheries Officer for Offshore Section).



Deepwater fishery is one of Tonga's most important marine resources which is currently retained for the local people of the country of Tonga. The deepwater fishery has experienced difficulty and challenges in increasing fishing effort which pushes the biological reproductive nature of the fish under stress. However, the National Institute of Water and Atmosphere Research (NIWA) Ltd, the government of New Zealand and government of Tonga, working in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries agree that a strategic and collaborative approach is much needed. The project entitled "Improved governance, management, and economic and biological sustainability of the demersal line fishery in Tonga" will bring benefits to all parties and the stakeholders they serve.

The main purposes of these two workshops were to train participants in the analysis of Tonga's deepwater snapper fishery data, fish age estimation, preparation of thin sections reading, and data analysis which includes the comparisons of reader variability and generation of growth curves. The outcome of these two workshops will strengthen the capacity of the Fisheries Technical staff on data analysis, fish biological sampling, sample processing and the analysis of resulting data.



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