

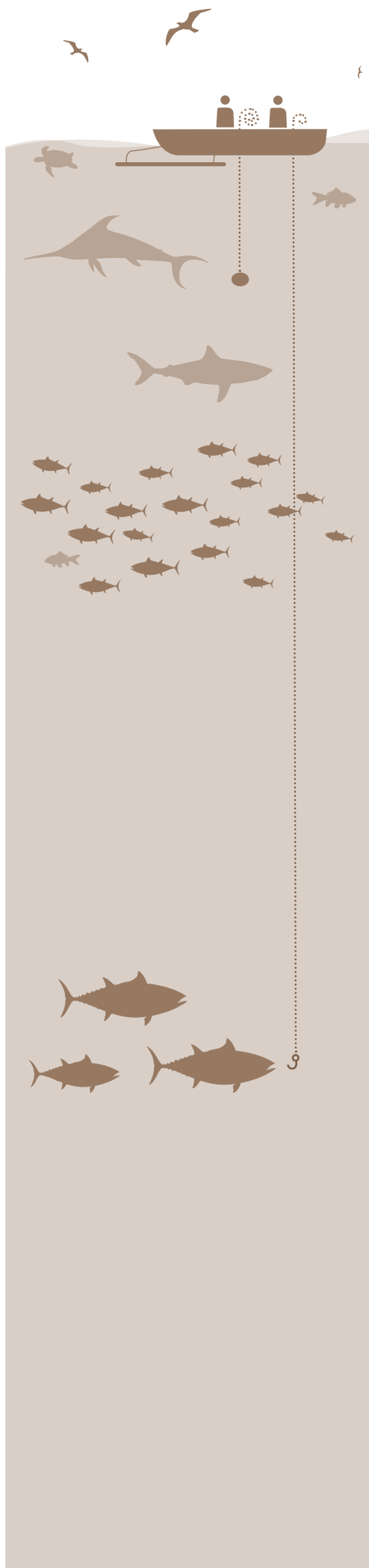


ARTESMAR[®]

The Art of Selective Fishing

Yellowfin Tuna

Thunnus albacares
Single-Hook | Handline
Philippines



The Art of Selective Fishing

Catching adult yellowfin tuna in the Philippines with single-hook handline gear is traditionally done by small wooden outrigger boats (“bangkas”) and involves the use of the drop-stone technique: A single, baited hook is attached to a stone by a self-releasing knot and then released into the depth of the sea. Once the bait reaches the targeted fishing zone of 100–200m, the stone is detached from the line with a strong pull by the fishermen—releasing the baited hook for attracting tuna. Using this technique, the bait can be positioned in the deeper pelagic zones where large, adult yellowfin tuna usually hunt their favourite prey, squid. The weight of the stone assures that the bait quickly passes through the upper layers of the water column, preventing juvenile tuna, sharks, billfish, turtles and seabirds from accidentally taking the bait.

Filipino handline tuna fishermen usually start fishing after sunset, first targeting flying fish or other small pelagics as bait for squid. The squid then serve as live bait for yellowfin tuna, which are usually caught during the night and early morning hours. The fishermen spend 2–3 days at sea, working the coastal waters of the Philippine archipelago.

The single-hook handline fishery that uses the drop-stone technique is arguably one of the most selective methods for catching adult yellowfin tuna worldwide, with bycatch rates of less than 2%.

About the Project

Filipino fishermen have been catching large yellowfin tuna with traditional single-hook handline gear for decades. This artisanal small-scale fishery still exists in various locations in the Philippines today; however, it is being increasingly marginalized by the industrial tuna fleet that works the high seas of the South Chinese Sea and the Western Central Pacific with pelagic long-line and purse seining vessels. This industrial fleet not only has a major impact on the sustainability of the tuna stocks, but also catches vulnerable species and juvenile tuna due to the unselective nature of their gear.

The Artesmar® program engages with community-based coastal fisheries in five locations around the Philippines. The initiative directly works with 3,000 fishermen and includes 800–1,000 small fishing boats. The fishery improvement process focuses on awareness creation, capacity building and empowerment of fishery stakeholders, communities and local authorities as the basis for future co-management models that encompass municipal fisheries in the Philippines. Key areas of improvement are the registration and licensing of vessels, the implementation of a catch documentation scheme and the establishment of a consistent process of data gathering in order to establish resource access rights and informed fishery management decisions. Additionally, Artesmar® provides technical coaching and training for fishermen and tuna traders for improved tuna handling and food safety practices, assuring consistent quality of tuna products and value for participating seafood businesses. The improvement of the primary landing value for yellowfin tuna through better catching and post harvest practices and the local taxation of resource access rights through licensing are key components of the value chain promotion to secure livelihoods in the participating coastal fishing communities.



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