



Policy and Strategy for Animal Welfare Tuna Purse Seiner Fleet V1.0 | August 2024





Policy Information

This Animal Welfare policy and strategy has been prepared with the support of the Fishing Industry Association members (FIA) of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

This is a live document that will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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Photo credit: Fishing Industry Association, Papua New Guinea



1. Introduction

Unlike farmed aquatic animals, wild-caught species enjoy a near-natural life. However, for wild-caught aquatic animals, the end of each life is commonly extremely stressful due to practices that would not be allowed in any kind of terrestrial animal production.

During the capture process, target species are often chased to exhaustion, crushed, asphyxiated, injured due to interaction with fishing gear, eaten by predators while trapped, or subject to decompression injuries as they are brought to the surface. If they survive the capture process, they often die of asphyxia due to air exposure or are killed without pre-slaughter stunning.

In addition to the capture experience, practices in and management of fisheries cause serious welfare and environmental problems. Overfishing of target species remains common in Europe and globally, threatening the future of whole populations of animals and the delicate balance in aquatic ecosystems. Non-target, by-catch animals are often killed, injured or highly stressed during capture, and the survival rates for those thrown back to the water can be low.

Wild-caught fishing is distinguished both by the huge number of animals affected and by the complete neglect of their welfare during slaughter. Fish suffer from numerous sources of harm during wild capture, including injuries from hooks and nets, injuries from changes in pressure, asphyxiation, injuries from being out of water, gill cutting, and live gutting.

There is a complete absence of requirements, objectives or initiatives on aquatic animal welfare in wild capture fisheries at EU level. This is despite Article 13 of the EU's foundational Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union requiring that EU fishery policy pay full regard to animal welfare.

The EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is focussed on the maximal extraction of animals as resources. It contains important objectives on the sustainability of fishing activities including maintaining the size of populations, and on prohibiting the discarding of dead animals. However, every year unsustainable fishing quotas are set, and rules are poorly observed and implemented. Both the [European Parliament](#) and the [European Council](#)'s Presidency conclusions have called for the inclusion of animal welfare in the CFP.

Few policies anywhere address fish welfare in wild capture fisheries. Stunning at slaughter is required for wild-caught eel in the Netherlands, and in New Zealand for aquatic animals caught and held alive for later slaughter.

What is the consumer perception?

European citizens recognise that the fish pain 'debate' is well and truly over. Fish are sentient animals with both positive and negative emotions and with complex social and behavioural needs. This is clear in surveys, in responses to media coverage, and public campaigns.



Catching, harvesting, handling and slaughtering aquatic animals as raw material for seafood products results in significant stress and suffering. Improper handling practices by fishermen and farmers may result in deterioration of quality, spoilage, and lower shelf life for seafood products.

Scientific research and evidence clearly establish that aquatic animals used for seafood production possess neuroanatomical, behavioural, and physiological attributes that allow them to experience pain and suffering. This is not only true for finfish as vertebrate species, but also for decapod crustaceans such as lobster, crab, and shrimp as well as for cephalopods such as octopus, squid, and cuttlefish.

FIA PNG members firmly believe that seafood from both wild and farmed origins will play an increasingly important role as a source of healthy, nutritious, and planet-friendly diets across the globe. To enjoy seafood and access its beneficial properties, aquatic animals must be caught, harvested, and killed in an appropriate manner.

2. Scope

This document applies to FIA PNG tuna fishing companies, Lobster catchers & processing members, FIA PNG staff, members, and buyers.

3. Purpose

This document delineates the approach, control, project development, and engagements to the process of the good practices of Animal Welfare of FIA PNG MSC fisheries certification.

- Communicate awareness for animal welfare across FIA PNG members and seafood supply chains, foster openness amongst suppliers, clients and other stakeholders, and initiate discussions and create interest and commitment for improvements and change;
- Engage in partnerships and actively work on improvements and research with our fisheries members (Tuna and Lobster), also with Skippers, technology providers, local authorities, animal welfare organizations and scientific institutions;
- Support and joint research and development in areas of need, specifically in terms of existing challenges for catchers – any gear type and killing or slaughter method – and implement improved practices;
- Based on science and monitoring, set up minimal performance standards and implement improved practices, whenever technically realistic and economically feasible to comply with the Animal Welfare principles;



4. Development

FIA PNG recognises that animal welfare considerations are at a very early stage for most seafood sectors. Hence, practical solutions and recommendations for improvements will be subject to continuous research and development and shall therefore be reflected in regularly updated versions of this policy and strategy.

Our engagement as a member of [Catch Welfare Platform](#) is the first step to moving ahead with our Strategy plan for research, development, and implementation

4.1 Compliance with Animal Welfare Standards' Requirements

Tuna Wild-Caught

Requirement	FIA PNG position	Performance
1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;	Tuna swim incredible distances as they migrate. The bigeye tuna (<i>T. obesus</i>), the yellowfin tuna (<i>T. albacares</i>), and all and The skipjack (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>), a commercially important species of relatively lower value, is also distributed in the three oceans. FIA PNG tuna fleet does not interfere in tuna access to a good diet, good health and water sources. It is a wild animal. Tuna stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean are in healthy status (WCPFC, 2024) No overfishing or overfished is occurring. FIA PNG works with Tuna Fishing Company operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.	100% compliance with principle # 1
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;	Tuna swim incredible distances as they migrate. The bigeye tuna (<i>T. obesus</i>), the yellowfin tuna (<i>T. albacares</i>), and all and The skipjack (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>), a commercially important species of relatively lower value, is also distributed in the three oceans. FIA PNG tuna fleet does not interfere in access to comfortable resting areas, and/or appropriate environment conditions. It is a wild animal. FIA PNG works with Tuna Fishing Company operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.	100% compliance with principle # 2
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;	Tuna swim incredible distances as they migrate. The bigeye tuna (<i>T. obesus</i>), the yellowfin tuna (<i>T. albacares</i>), and all and The skipjack (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>), a commercially important species of relatively lower value, is also distributed in the three oceans. FIA PNG tuna fleet does not interfere in any stage	100% compliance with principle # 3



	<p>of the tuna life cycle and tuna growing stages neither. It is a wild animal.</p> <p>FIA PNG works with Tuna Fishing Company operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.</p>	
<p>4. Freedom to express (most) normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind;</p>	<p>Tuna swim incredible distances as they migrate. The bigeye tuna (<i>T. obesus</i>), the yellowfin tuna (<i>T. albacares</i>), and all and The skipjack (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>), a commercially important species of relatively lower value, is also distributed in the three oceans. FIA PNG tuna fleet does not practice any type of tuna fattening or ranching, we use purse seiner for capturing tuna. It is a wild animal.</p> <p>FIA PNG works with Tuna Fishing Company operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.</p>	<p>100% compliance with principle # 4</p>
<p>5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.</p>	<p>FIA PNG killing tuna after brailing and storing on hatches onboard. It is a very fast process that aims to maintain the high quality of the raw material (tuna) by freezing it as soon as possible.</p> <p>We will start to assess stages to analyse where we are and how we can improve. Initially we will map qualified academia and research centers to develop a long term plan on assessment; in a later stage we will engage with Animal Welfare research and projects to develop good practices as much as practical and science based.</p>	<p>On development</p>

Beyond the Animal Welfare standard:

In addition to compliance with Animal Welfare standard requirements, FIA PNG has been working on Marine Ecosystem Animal Welfare like sharks and any bycatch of non-target species by setting up the following

1. [Marine Litter and Fishing Gear procedure and audit tool V4.0](#) – Global Ghost Gear Initiative recognition for good practices to mitigate ghost gear
2. [Shark Finning Policy 2022](#)
3. [Best Practices for Safe Release of Sharks, Turtles, Mantas, and Whale Sharks V1.0](#)
4. [Strategic Plan for Mitigation of Bycatch – V2.0](#)
5. [Transaction and Conservation Measures Management requirements FIA PNG V1.0](#)

FIA PNG has been working on Animal Welfare for more than a decade, directly and indirectly, we are committed to setting up good practices and engaging in research and development in this area.



Lobster Wild-Caught

Requirement	FIA PNG position	Performance
<p>1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;</p>	<p>Rock lobster are sometimes called ‘crayfish’ or ‘crays’. They can live for over 20 years and reach sizes over five kilograms, although fishing rules to protect the breeding stock mean that animals over three kilograms are rarely retained by fishers. This lobster species belongs to the spiny lobster family, which get their name from the hundreds of tiny forwardpointing spines that cover their body and carapace, as well as their most prominent feature – the two huge antennae that protrude from their head. Whilst these antennae are vital for spiny lobsters to find their way around, they also form a crucial defensive weapon and communications tool. In large groups, the lobsters set out on their march, trekking at night, FIA PNG works with the National Fisheries Authority for the Sustainable Management of the fishery and with Lobster operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.</p>	<p>100% compliance with principle # 1</p>
<p>2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;</p>	<p>Rock lobster are sometimes called ‘crayfish’ or ‘crays’. They can live for over 20 years and reach sizes over five kilograms, although fishing rules to protect the breeding stock mean that animals over three kilograms are rarely retained by fishers. This lobster species belongs to the spiny lobster family, which get their name from the hundreds of tiny forwardpointing spines that cover their body and carapace, as well as their most prominent feature – the two huge antennae that protrude from their head. Whilst these antennae are vital for spiny lobsters to find their way around, they also form a crucial defensive weapon and communications tool. In large groups, the lobsters set out on their march, trekking at night, FIA PNG works with the National Fisheries Authority for the Sustainable Management of the fishery and with Lobster operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.</p>	<p>100% compliance with principle # 2</p>
<p>3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;</p>	<p>Rock lobster are sometimes called ‘crayfish’ or ‘crays’. They can live for over 20 years and reach sizes over five kilograms, although fishing rules to protect the breeding stock mean that animals over three kilograms are rarely retained by fishers. This lobster species belongs to the spiny lobster family, which get their name from the hundreds of tiny forwardpointing spines that cover their body and carapace, as well as their most prominent feature – the two huge antennae that protrude from their head. Whilst these antennae are vital for spiny lobsters to find their way around, they also form a</p>	<p>100% compliance with principle # 3</p>



	<p>crucial defensive weapon and communications tool. In large groups, the lobsters set out on their march, trekking at night,</p> <p>FIA PNG works with the National Fisheries Authority for the Sustainable Management of the fishery and with Lobster operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.</p>	
<p>4. Freedom to express (most) normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind;</p>	<p>Rock lobster are sometimes called ‘crayfish’ or ‘crays’. They can live for over 20 years and reach sizes over five kilograms, although fishing rules to protect the breeding stock mean that animals over three kilograms are rarely retained by fishers. This lobster species belongs to the spiny lobster family, which get their name from the hundreds of tiny forwardpointing spines that cover their body and carapace, as well as their most prominent feature – the two huge antennae that protrude from their head. Whilst these antennae are vital for spiny lobsters to find their way around, they also form a crucial defensive weapon and communications tool. In large groups, the lobsters set out on their march, trekking at night,</p> <p>FIA PNG works with the National Fisheries Authority for the Sustainable Management of the fishery and with Lobster operators on awareness creation and brings animal welfare considerations to their attention.</p>	<p>100% compliance with principle # 4</p>
<p>5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.</p>	<p>We will start to assess stages to analyse where we are and how we can improve slaughter practices. Initially we will map qualified academia and research centers to develop a long term plan on assessment; in a later stage we will engage with Animal Welfare research and projects to develop good practices as much as practical and science based.</p>	<p>On development</p>

FIA PNG is committed not only to the sustainability and crew welfare in our fisheries but also to the welfare of animals living in our Marine Ecosystems.

In addition to the marine ecosystem’s commitments, FIA PNG invites our buyers, and stakeholders to work with us to support basic animal welfare standards. This includes our commitment to the Five Freedoms for animals under human control:

1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;



4. Freedom to express (most) normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind;
5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

FIA PNG believes that all animals that end up as seafood products in one of the company's global supply chains shall have been raised, captured, handled, and killed with the least stress and suffering. FIA PNG recognizes the integral role of animal welfare and health in sustainable food production, and FIA PNG commits to progressing toward realizing the highest welfare standards possible within its seafood harvesting systems and supply chains.

We will work with our Captains, Skippers, stakeholders, NGOs and academia to develop and set up programs to monitor compliance, particularly concerning the 5 principles of Animal Welfare.

Global Ghost Gear Initiative and FIA PNG Marine Litter and Fishing Gear mitigation

To help protect animals from lost and abandoned fishing gear, FIA PNG members are implemented the Best Practices for Fisheries to mitigate Ghost Gear based on the [Global Ghost Gear Initiative \(GGGI\)](#), which we launched in 2021. Most ghost gear (lost and abandoned fishing gear) is made of polymers, and it's a huge contributor to plastic pollution in our oceans. FIA PNG's decision to join the GGGI reflects its commitment and implement GGGI best practices to combat this issue, and it's leading by example for hundreds of other global brands who have a duty to address it.

Every year, at least **640,000 tonnes** of ghost gear is lost or abandoned at sea. This makes up around **10% of all marine debris** entering our oceans annually.

5. Responsibility of FIA Office

The FIAO will ensure full stakeholder engagement, and project development; with a further stage of implementation of this FIA PNG good practices of Animal Welfare in our fisheries.

The FIAO will audit on an annual basis FIA fishing company members and fishing vessels. The fishing vessel will be randomly audited against the FIA PNG policy which will include Animal Welfare. The outcomes will be shared with the FIA fishing company and the FIAO management. FIA PNG members shall provide access to documented evidence for traceability and reporting onboard.



5.1 Monitoring 100% observer coverage onboard – Tuna Fishery

Our tuna fleet is under the monitoring of the National Fishery Authority (NFA) which places observers onboard to supervise each FIA PNG MSC trip. Observers are fully responsible for recording, and reporting activities onboard our fleet and direct reporting to the NFA on Fishery Management.

6. History of Revision

Revision No.	Date	Reasons/ Details
00	1 st July 2024	Draft
V1.0	29 th August 2024	Initial Release

References:

1. Fish Welfare in UK Wild Caught Fisheries, August 2023 <https://www.animalask.org/post/fish-welfare-in-uk-wild-caught-fisheries>
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3. Wild-Caught Fishing Factsheet, January 2022 <https://law.lclark.edu/live/files/33123-wild-caught-fishing-faq-march-2022>
4. Fish Welfare in Wild Capture Fisheries, 2022 <https://www.ali.fish/blog/fish-welfare-in-wild-capture-fisheries-xaptl>