
**PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE COMMISSION
FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN
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**INFORMATION PAPER ON FISH LAUNDERING ACTIVITIES BY LARGE-SCALE TUNA
LONGLINE VESSELS**

Submitted by the delegation of Japan

As a result of investigations against tuna freezer cargo vessels by enforcement authorities of Japan, it turned out that fish laundering activities have been conducted by owners of Chinese Taipei's large-scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs), conspiring with cargo vessel companies (i.e. disguise the IUU catch as licensed vessel, or caught at strictly regulated area as the other area). In addition, information obtained through the investigation suggest that such illegal activities are not limited these cases but widely and constantly conducted. Japanese survey on import statistics also supports such doubt. Since those illegal activities cause severe negative impact on stock assessment as well as in compliance the management measures, urgent actions to eliminate those activities are necessary. Japan hereby submits the report on this matter.

I. INTRODUCTION

On July 6, 2004, the Japan Coast Guard arrested a freezer cargo vessel named "Lung Yuin" (2,000 GRT, Panama flag, operated by a Chinese Taipei's company) for violation of the reporting requirements to the Japanese authority when the vessel stayed in Shimizu, landing frozen tunas caught and transshipped by 25 Chinese Taipei's large-scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs) and 3 Vanuatu LSTLVs owned by Chinese Taipei's residents. As a result of the investigation on this cargo vessel, it turned out that all the 28 LSTLVs involved submitted to the Japanese authority false information on fishing areas (e.g. eastern Pacific --> western central Pacific), vessels names (e.g. IUU LSTLVs --> Chinese Taipei's licensed LSTLVs, or LSTLV not authorized to fish for bigeye tuna --> those authorized) and/or transshipment positions and dates (e.g. at-sea --> in-ports). Two logbooks (true and false) and other evidences collected onboard the cargo vessel disclosed an organized operation that produced all the false information under the instruction from owners of the involved LSTLVs and cargo vessel. More problematically, the concerned parties informed FAJ on this case that this sort of organized laundering activity is not limited to this case but widely conducted not only in the Pacific but also in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. This well agrees with the results of the following study.

On September 30, 2004, the Fisheries Agency of Japan (FAJ) conducted full inspection on-board another freezer cargo vessel named "Suruga No.1" (2,596 GRT, Panama flag, operated by a Japanese company). The inspection also disclosed similar organized laundering activities. But two new types of laundering were found in this inspection. One is use of, PRC's vessel names; the other is use of Pacific Ocean catch to hide excessive Atlantic bigeye catch by Chinese Taipei's LSTLVs.

Some examples of such laundering activities relating to WCPO disclosed by inspections are shown in Fig.1.

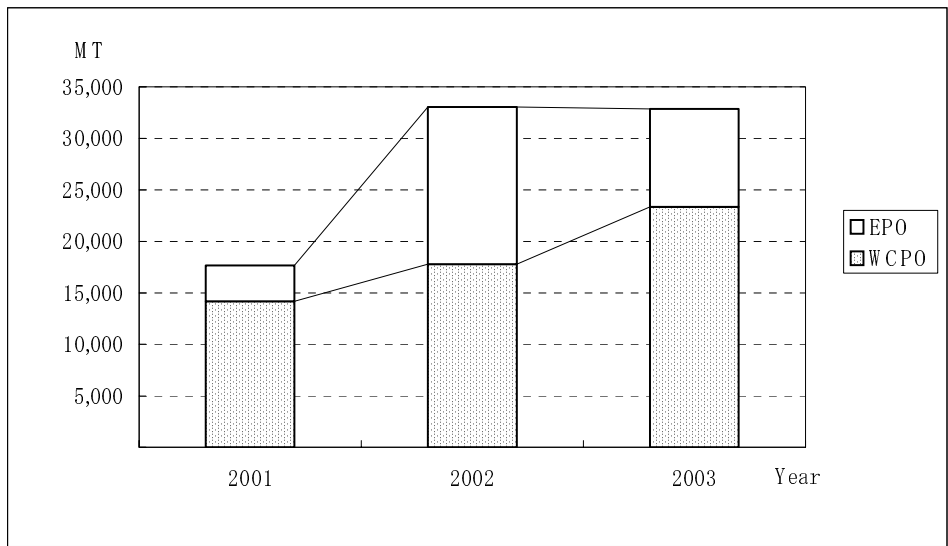
Fig.1 Examples of laundering activities by Chinese Taipei's and Chinese LSTLVs

< Actual >					< Reported >			
Vessel name	Flag	Area	Transship amount		Vessel name	Flag	Area	Transship amount
CHUN YING 212	VANUATU	WCPO	96	⇒	CHUN YING 212	VANUATU	WCPO	50
CHUN YING 777	VANUATU	WCPO	50		CHIN FU YUH	TAIWAN	WCPO	141
CHIN FU YUH	TAIWAN	WCPO	45					
FONG KUO 3	VANUATU	EPO	60	⇒	FONG KUO 3	VANUATU	WCPO	10
					FONG KUO 136	TAIWAN	WCPO	50
BHASKARA 9	IUU	EPO	75	⇒	LUNG SOON 666	TAIWAN	WCPO	75
LUNG SOON 888	TAIWAN	EPO	29	⇒	LUNG SOON 888	TAIWAN	WCPO, EPO	96
BHASKARA 10	IUU	EPO	67					
YUH YEOU 6	TAIWAN	AT	35	⇒	SHIN YEOU 6	TAIWAN	WCPO	82
YUH YEOU 236	TAIWAN	AT	46					
SHANG JEN 168	TAIWAN	AT	70	⇒	DA YANG 18	CHNA	WCPO	91
YING JEN 636	TAIWAN	AT	70		DA YANG 11	CHNA	WCPO	100
OCEAN DIAMOND	IUU	AT	50					
RYH SING 66	TAIWAN	WCPO	9	⇒	RYH SNG 66	TAWAN	WCPO	30
BHINEKA	IUU	WCPO	19					
CHANG LI 1	TAIWAN	WCPO	20	⇒	CHANG LI1	TAWAN	WCPO	45
CHANG JAAN 1	VANUATU	WCPO	24					
XIN SHI JI 31	CHINA	WCPO	28	⇒	XN SHIJI31	CHINA	WCPO	50
TAI YUAN YU 008	CHINA	WCPO	22					

II. IMPORT OF PACIFIC TUNAS CAUGHT BY CHINESE TAIPEI'S LSTLVs

FAJ studied import record of frozen tunas. In the recent three years, Chinese Taipei's catch has increased in WCPO, contrary to the Resolutions calling to restrain the fishing effort and capacity adopted at the MHLC and WCPFC PrepCons. On the other hand, catch in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) shows increased drastically in 2002 and then decreased in 2003 (Fig.2). This phenomenon can be interpreted as a shift of fishing grounds between EPO and WCPO. At the same time, it is also plausible to interpret at least a part of increased WCPO bigeye catch in 2003 as the result of laundering activities to cover the EPO catch.

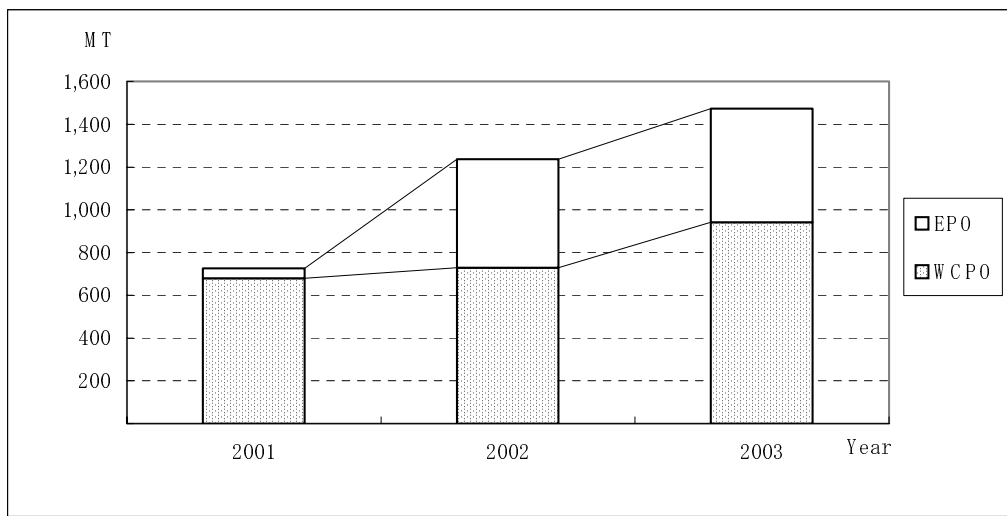
Fig.2 Japanese import of frozen Pacific tunas from Chinese Taipei



III. IMPORT OF PACIFIC BIGEYE FROM OLD LSTLVs

Another peculiar thing FAJ found is an increasing bigeye catch of old Chinese Taipei’s LSTLVs built before 1985 (Fig. 3). Some of those old LSTLVs suddenly exported large amount of bigeye, despite there was no import record of those vessels in previous years (Attachment). Those old vessels have low freezing capacity and are not suitable for the production of sashimi-quality tunas. They usually catch albacore for canning purpose and land catches at ports of countries other than Japan such as Pago Pago and Bangkok. Since their albacore catches never appear in the Japanese import record nor are verified, old LSTLVs are an easy target of tuna laundering activities, i.e. bigeye catch in other oceans can be imported easily under old LSTLVs’ names as their catch in the WCPO.

Fig.3 Japanese import of Pacific bigeye from Chinese Taipei’s old LSTLVs built before 1985



IV. CONCLUSION

As a result of the investigation on the tuna freezer cargo vessels as well as the studies on import data, it turned out that fish laundering activities such as falsification of catch area or name of vessel are conducted widely and systematically by owners of Chinese Taipei's large-scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs) and cargo vessels in all oceans. AT this stage, the scale of laundering amount in the WCPO is not so large unlike those in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean where huge amount of bigeye (around 18,000MT) had disguised (attached the result of analysis of import data submitted to the ICCAT as a reference). However, taking into account the fact that ICCAT recently takes a decisive action against the laundering activities and that such illegal activities have been and will be moved from the areas strictly regulated to other areas less regulated, it is urgent for the WCPFC to take measures to avoid WCPO as a target area of these illegal activities.

Attachment Old LSTLVs and their catch in the Pacific Ocean

Taiwanese vessel	Built year	Age	2001			2002			2003			Unit:MT
			WCPO	EPO	TOTAL	WCPO	EPO	TOTAL	WCPO	EPO	TOTAL	
1	1965	39				44.0	27.5	44.0	65.4		65.4	
2	1967	37						27.5	17.2		17.2	
3	1968	36										
4	1971	33	13.6		13.6							
5	1972	32	22.4		22.4	13.7	9.2	22.9	20.9		20.9	
6	1972	32	33.6		33.6	65.5		65.5	6.6	3.0	9.6	
7	1972	32								10.1	10.1	
8	1972	32	.8	1.8	2.6	1.1	5.2	6.3	1.4	20.2	26.8	
9	1973	31				35.9		35.9				
10	1973	31					10.4	10.4	166.1		166.1	
11	1974	30										
12	1974	30				69.5	5.1	69.5	10.0		10.0	
13	1974	30				3.4		3.4	3.7		3.7	
14	1974	30										
15	1974	30										
16	1979	25	3.5		3.5							
17	1979	25	3.1	5.1	8.2	5.6		5.6				
18	1979	25	102.7		102.7	117.6		117.6	117.0		117.0	
19	1980	24	179.1		179.1	109.2		109.2	88.5		88.5	
20	1980	24	40.7		40.7	23.6	5.1	28.7	13.5	19.2	32.8	
21	1980	24					68.0	68.0	10.0	155.7	165.7	
22	1980	24				29.6		29.6	13.3	40.2	53.4	
23	1980	24							3.3		3.3	
24	1980	24	83.7		83.7							
25	1980	24	96.3		96.3							
26	1980	24				8.5		8.5	16.0	4.8	20.8	
27	1980	24				27.2		27.2	24.5		24.5	
28	1981	23							60.0		60.0	
29	1981	23	3.8		3.8							
30	1981	23	6.8		6.8							
31	1981	23	3.0	5.3	8.3	4.2		4.2	1.8	.7	2.5	
32	1981	23	11.1		11.1	11.7		11.7				
33	1981	23	7.8		7.8	53.3	11.3	64.6	57.6	34.2	91.9	
34	1982	22				3.3		3.3	.9		.9	
35	1982	22				41.1	209.2	250.3	179.4		179.4	
36	1982	22					24.7	24.7	39.9		39.9	
37	1982	22					30.3	30.3	5.7		5.7	
38	1982	22				19.4		19.4	17.8		17.8	
39	1982	22	33.7		33.7		23.8	23.8	14.6		14.6	
40	1982	22										
41	1984	20	23.3		23.3	41.1		41.1	187.0		187.0	
42	1984	20	44.7		44.7				36.0		36.0	
43	1984	20										
TOTAL amount of import			680.1	45.8	725.9	728.3	508.4	1,236.7	941.8	530.9	1,472.8	
TOTAL number of vessels imported			18	4	19	21	15	30	24	13	29	

(Reference: Document submitted to the ICCAT)

Result of analysis of Japanese import record submitted to the ICCAT

I Import of Atlantic Bigeye Caught by Chinese Taipei's LSTLVs

1. Unrealistically large bigeye catches by Chinese Taipei's LSTLVs in the Indian Ocean

FAJ studied import records of frozen tunas. In the recent three years, Chinese Taipei's bigeye catch almost doubled from 27,618 MT in 2001 to 52,220MT in 2003 in the Indian Ocean, whereas the number of its LSTLVs did not increase much (from 301 to 332 vessels, Table 1). The bigeye CPUE of the Japanese LSTLV shows a clear downward trend in the Indian Oceans (Fig.1). Moreover, while in Japanese LSTLV catches, the ratio of bigeye tuna in the total tuna catch (BE+YF) decreased in the recent years as the bigeye CPUE dropped, the bigeye ratio increased in the same period in the Chinese Taipei's catch (Fig. 2). The Japanese catch trend meets that of Chinese LSTLVs. Only Chinese Taipei's fleet showed a reverse catch trend and produced unrealistically high bigeye catch ratios. In the Indian Ocean, it is very rare or almost impossible that bigeye catch ratio exceeds 70% of the total tuna catch. When we look at only the import record by freezer cargo vessels operated by Chinese Taipei's companies, the reverse catch trend becomes more conspicuous (Fig. 2).

Table 1 Import of frozen bigeye from Chinese Taipei

(Unit: MT)

	2001	2002	2003	2004 (Jan-Jun)
Atlantic bigeye				
Quantity	14,290	16,419	16,352	9,083
Number of LSTLVs	180	167	147	119
BE/Total tuna catch (BE+YF)	81.3%	87.3%	84.5%	83.1%
Indian Ocean Bigeye				
Quantity	27,618	37,727	52,220	26,747
Number of LSTLVs	301	303	332	288
BE/Total tuna catch (BE+YF)	63.0%	61.4%	69.9%	54.0%

Fig.1 Standardized bigeye CPUE of Japan for All Indian Ocean expressed in relative scale in which the average from 1960 to 2002 is 1.0

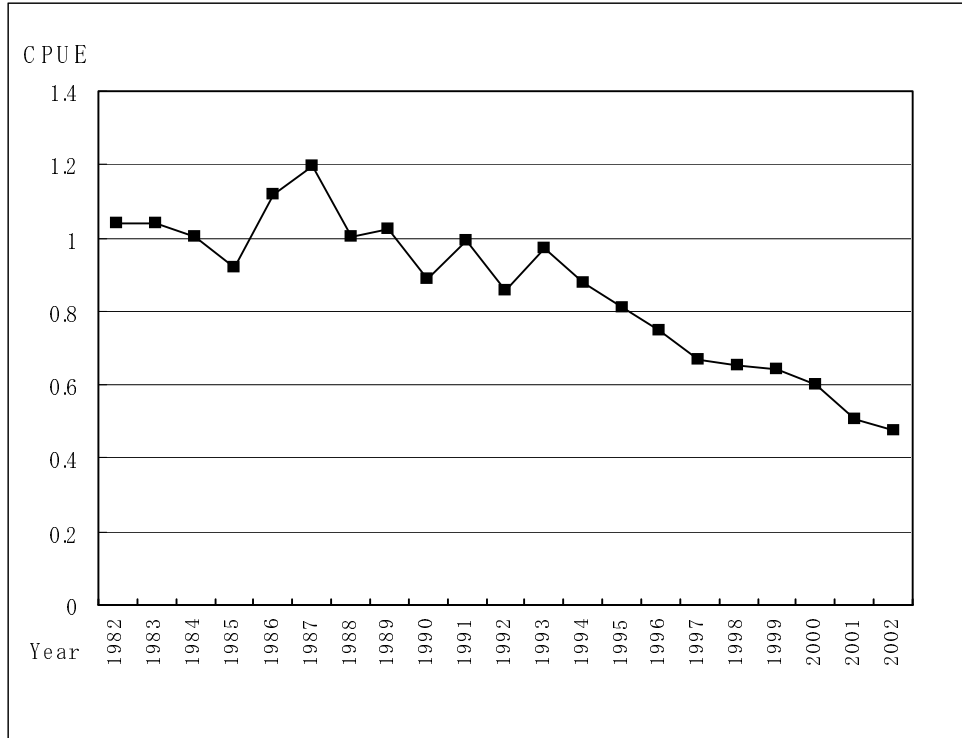
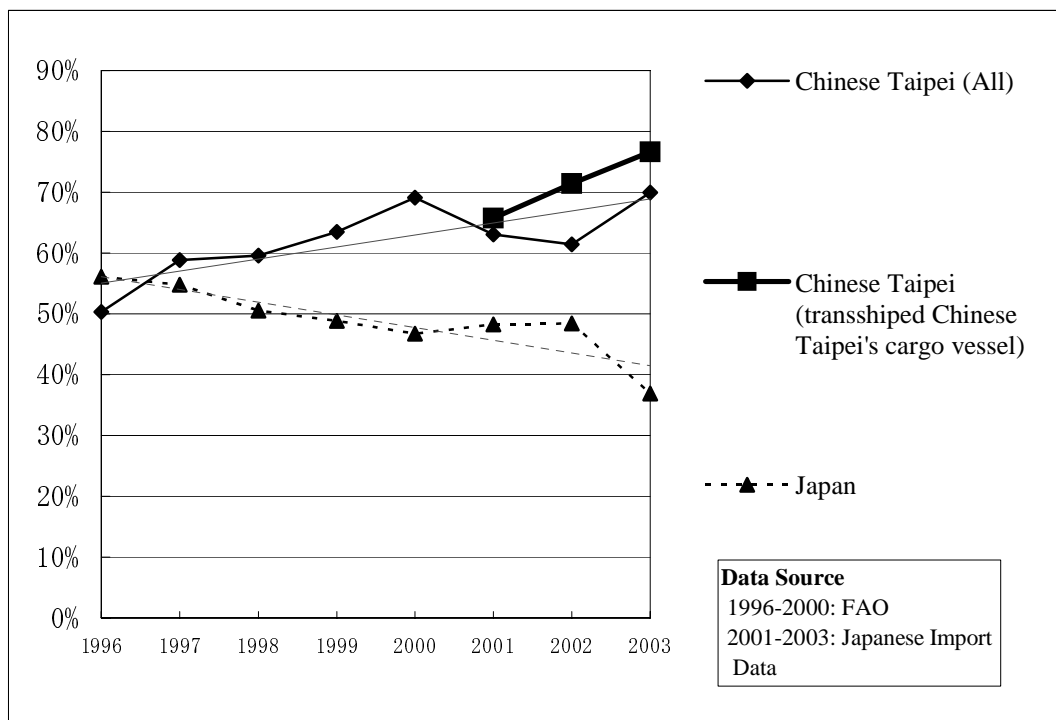
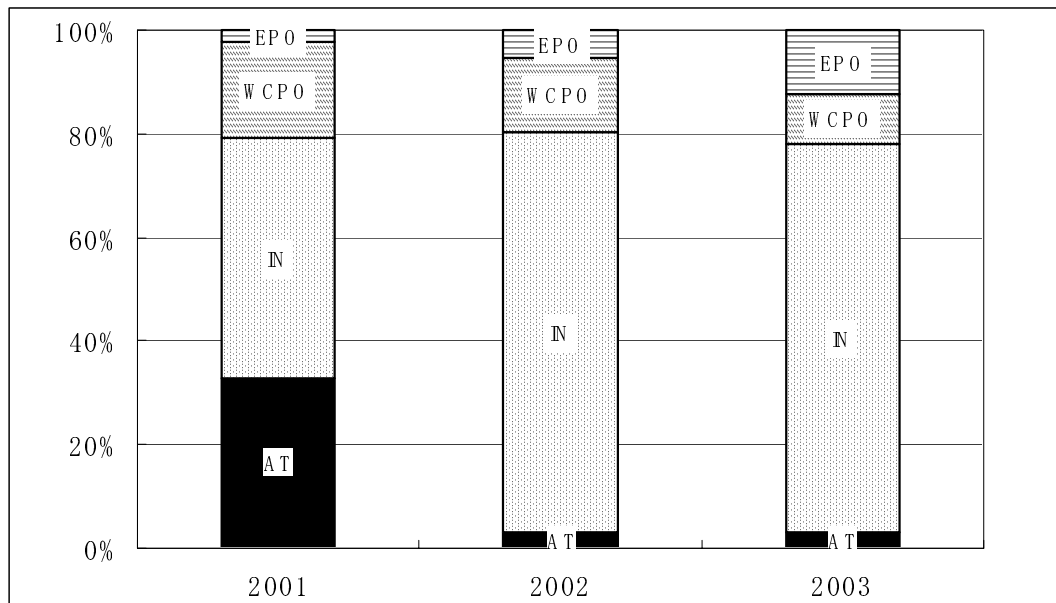


Fig.2 Ratio of bigeye in the Indian Ocean tuna catch



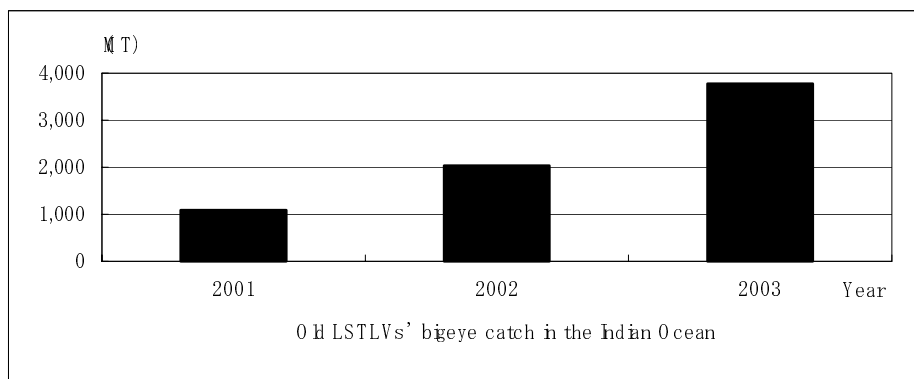
A more peculiar phenomenon shown in the import record of those cargo vessels operated by the Chinese Taipei's companies is Atlantic bigeye tuna having virtually disappeared in the recent three years (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 Import of bigeye tuna by Chinese's Taipei's cargo vessels



Another peculiar thing FAJ found is an increasing bigeye catch of old Chinese Taipei's LSTLVs built before 1980 (Fig. 4). Those old vessels have low freezing capacity and are not suitable for the production of sashimi-quality tunas. They usually catch albacore for canning purpose and land catches at such other ports than Japanese as Cape Town. Since their albacore catches never appear in the Japanese import record, old LSTLVs are an easy target of tuna laundering activities, i.e. Atlantic bigeye catch can be imported easily under the disguise of old LSTLVs catch in the Indian Ocean.

Fig. 4 Old LSTLVs' bigeye catch in the Indian Ocean



In short, the import records of the Chinese Taipei's LSTLVs strongly suggests a high level of laundering activities under the disguise of Indian Ocean catch to hide excessive Atlantic bigeye catch.

2. Estimated amount of Atlantic bigeye catch involved in the laundering activities

In the estimation, the catch of Atlantic bigeye involved in the laundering activities was considered to consist of two parts: the total bigeye catch of old LSTLVs (built in and before 1980) and the excessive amount of bigeye catch (bigeye import amount over three times of yellowfin amount from the same vessel : $BE - YF \times 3$) of young LSTLVs (built after 1980) in the Indian Ocean. Although there is a possibility that other LSTLVs' catch in the Indian Ocean was laundered to be old LSTLVs', that possibility is negligible since no catch limit is set for Indian Ocean catch; no reason exists for laundering. Then it is a safe and reasonable assumption that all the old LSTLVs import of Indian Ocean bigeye was disguised Atlantic bigeye catch of other LSTLVs. Also since it is inconceivable based upon the Japanese catch record that bigeye / yellowfin catch ratio exceeds three to one (3 : 1) in the Indian Ocean, it is a safe and reasonable assumption that the bigeye amount over three times of the yellowfin amount is disguised Atlantic bigeye catch. When one considers that there is a strong possibility that the whole bigeye catch (not just a portion over 3 times of YF) of some LSTLVs declared at the Japanese custom as of Indian Ocean origin was in actuality of Atlantic origin, one can clearly see the conservative nature of this estimate. The result of estimation is shown in Table2; around 18,000 MT of Atlantic bigeye tuna was estimated to be imported in 2003 under the disguise of Indian Ocean origin.

Table 2 Estimated amount of Atlantic bigeye tuna import under the disguise of Indian Ocean bigeye

	(Unit: M T)			
	2001	2002	2003	2004 (Jan-Jun)
Bigeye Import from old LSTLVs	1,089	2,037	3,776	1,554
Bigeye import amount over three times of yellowfin amount from the same vessel	4,692	5,974	15,168	5,750
Total	5,781	8,011	18,944	7,304

3. Conclusion

The above estimate dealt only with the case of laundering by use of Indian Ocean catch as the disguise. There are other cases using PRC vessel names and/or Pacific Ocean catch.

Significance of the laundering activities for the ICCAT management regime is quite high. The Commission fortunately contained fishing activities by IUU LSTLVs in the Convention area but is now facing the laundering activities with the same level of significance to the ICCAT conservation effects. The bias to the data is also a problem.

In view of the seriousness of these problems, Chinese Taipei and FAJ started consultations to further investigate the laundering activities and to work out effective measures to eliminate such activities. Those measures will mainly cover three areas; strict monitoring and control of transshipment, strict control of issuance of statistical documents (SD) and timely exchange of information on SD and landing, and adjustment of excessive fishing effort corresponding to catch limits. The result of consultations will be reported to the Commission meeting

II. Import of Atlantic Bigeye Caught by PRC's LSTLVs

The Table 3 shows estimated Atlantic bigeye catch by PRC's LSTLVs. Almost all bigeye imported to Japan is gutted and gilled (G/G) and its round weight can be obtained by multiply 1.13 to the imported amount. Usually it takes three months on average to deliver the frozen tunas from Atlantic fishing ground to Japan. In estimation, three assumptions were used: no time lag, three month time lag and six month time lag. The three month time lag assumption is most plausible. As a result, the overage from 2003 was 3,903 mt and the adjusted catch limit is 1,097 mt, which was already exceeded by import amount of this year. China and Japan are engaged in the consultations on this matter and will present the outcomes to the Commission meeting.

Table 3 Estimate of Chinese Bigeye Catch - Bigeye Catch of China calculated from Japanese Import data

	2002	2003
Initial Catch Limit	4,000	5,000
Quota Transfer from Japan	1,100	1,250
Total	5,100	6,250
Catch Data from Compliance Table	5,100	5,510.5
Adjusted Catch Limit	5,839.5	-
Catches	739.5	-
Balance		
Adjusted Catch Limit	5,100	3,766
Estimated Catches (Landing Amount*1.13)	7,584	8,054
Balance	2,484	4,288
Data Period	2002.1-2003.12	2003.1-2004.12
Trial Calculation (1) ^{*1}		
Adjusted Catch Limit	5,100	4,033
Estimated Catches (Landing Amount*1.13)	7,317	7,936
Balance	2,217	3,903
Data Period	2001.1-2001.3	2003.4-2004.3
Trial Calculation (2) ^{*2}		
Adjusted Catch Limit	5,100	3,998
Estimated Catches (Landing Amount*1.13)	4,294	7,612
Balance	2,252	3,614
Data Period	2001.1-2001.6	2002.7-2003.6
Trial Calculation (3) ^{*3}		
Adjusted Catch Limit	5,100	3,998
Estimated Catches (Landing Amount*1.13)	4,294	7,612
Balance	2,252	3,614
Data Period	2001.1-2001.6	2002.7-2003.6

*1: Based on the assumption of no time lag between catches and landings

*2: Based on the assumption of 3months of time lag between catches and landings

*3: Based on the assumption of 6months of time lag between catches and landings

Attachment 1. Old LSTLVs and their catch in the Indian Ocean

No.	GRT	Bl t year	2001			2002			2003			2004		
			BE	YF	BE%	BE	YF	BE%	BE	YF	BE%	BE	YF	BE%
1	278	1969				86,537	5,613	94%	229,162	35,608	87%	67,453	7,557	90%
2	458	1978							190,101	18,105	91%	172,637	54,926	76%
3	491	1979	27,201	9,670	74%	76,740	34,104	69%	121,185	16,193	88%	126,700	22,049	85%
4	264	1971	13,985	11,462	55%	51,331	14,270	78%						
5	264	1971	12,664	12,706	50%	8,990	20,660	30%	50,936	1,854	96%			
6	203	1979	16,541	13,935	54%	4,803	2,808	63%	2,262	2,339	49%			
7	452	1979	12,374	2,688	82%	30,133	163,506	16%	40,304	174,175	19%	27,998	170,313	14%
8	284	1974				5,355	11,370	32%	152,069	14,879	91%			
9	300	1974	17,051	30,676	36%				53,205	25,895	67%			
10	491	1980	77,627	3,804	95%	50,573	11,968	81%	186,544	9,996	95%	204,646	12,090	94%
11	220	1974				140,440	20,811	87%	137,710	63,535	68%			
12	344	1979							28,232	13,229	68%	56,470	3,698	94%
13	442	1975				25,822	397,270	6%	174,803	207,486	46%	102,571	2,149	98%
14	498	1979	169,905	47,229	78%	48,915	20,052	71%	125,291	28,296	82%			
15	281	1969	54,902	4,808	92%	109,453	8,177	93%	264,835	7,215	97%	133,387	16,273	89%
16	218	1973	101,451	8,489	92%	146,535	3,325	98%	284,324	10,456	96%	99,058	5,452	95%
17	267	1968				24,950	7,944	76%	264,495	29,266	90%	114,129	41,072	74%
18	283	1974				62,099	4,931	93%	193,379	40,841	83%	145,283	30,673	83%
19	478	1980							36,679	771	98%			
20	201	1975				10,761	13,123	45%						
21	265	1971				56,155	34,152	62%	126,913	28,086	82%			
22	377	1969	407	134	75%	39,254	10,750	79%	250,698	55,040	82%			
23	492	1980	75,335	91,308	45%	195,751	37,396	84%	261,171	61,264	81%	125,737	60,434	68%
24	492	1980	155,998	43,583	78%	224,650	44,482	83%	198,499	50,318	80%	34,660	25,063	58%
25	459	1975	32,399	11,610	74%	193,765	27,301	88%	149,677	50,324	75%	21,677	37,599	37%
26	437	1979	157,866	79,443	67%	246,501	135,236	65%	149,563	102,199	59%	38,039	36,436	51%
27	371	1980	46,022	20,033	70%	12,564	4,351	74%						
28	473	1979	117,312	27,459	81%	184,682	42,871	81%	103,506	23,473	82%	83,157	38,433	68%
-	-	-	1,089,040	419,037	72%	2,036,759	1,076,471	65%	3,775,543	1,070,843	78%	1,553,602	564,217	73%