

# Costa Rica Fisheries

## In Detail



### The Costa Rican Large Pelagics Fisheries

- The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**  
 stretches over 589,682.99 km<sup>2</sup> (565,682.99 km<sup>2</sup> in the Pacific, 24,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the Caribbean), 11 times more than Costa Rica's land surface.
- Large pelagics are large marine species**  
 such as tuna, mahi mahi, sharks and swordfish that live most of their life in open-ocean surface waters and migrate long distances.

- Costa Rica exports**  
 most of its large pelagic species. About 95% of the mahi mahi is exported to the US, which is also the main destination for fresh tuna. Opportunities are now opening up in Europe.
- Are 25,000 tonnes of tuna per year**  
 is estimated to be caught in the Costa Rican EEZ, most of it by foreign industrial purse seiner boats. The domestic fleet accounts for only 4% of the catch.
- The Costa Rican longline fishing sector**  
 is made up of around 400 medium-size boats with each boat carrying between five and eight people, a working population of around 2,000 to 3,200 directly linked to the sector. Together with the families that depend on this activity, the affected population is between 10,000 and 16,000 people. Employment in the value chain is estimated to be 72,000 jobs including indirect jobs such as transportation, fishing supplies, food, mechanics, and others.

## Sustainable Fisheries Platform

Set up in 2017 using UNDP methodology, the National Platform for Sustainable Large Pelagic Fisheries is a forum for collaborative dialogue and convergence among public institutions with authority over ocean-based activities, and the different sectors and trade, and the different sectors involved in the supply chain - catching, processing and trading of large pelagic fish species from Costa Rican waters. Its aim is to meet global and domestic market requirements for responsible seafood, providing a unified country response focused on benefitting domestic fishing communities and the country as a whole. The Platform is part of the Global Marine Commodities project, which covers Costa Rica, Ecuador, Indonesia and the Philippines.



#### A Government - Led Platform

facilitating stakeholder participation and developing agendas to improve the social and environmental performance of the seafood supply chain.



#### Developing Precision Fisheries

to improve statistics and promote innovation and technology for sustainable fisheries.



**Strengthening Public - Private Governance** for effective fishing management.



#### Developing and Consolidating

Costa Rican responsible seafood to meet increasing demand in domestic and international markets.

- A National Platform for Sustainable Fisheries of Large Pelagics
- A National Action Plan developed to improve the fisheries of large pelagics, focusing on:



#### Precision fisheries



Development and consolidation of responsible seafood markets and consumption



#### Effective Public-Private governance



Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) for tuna, mahi-mahi and swordfish with the support of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP).

- Establishing a biological, socioeconomic and productivity information system to improve fisheries management.
- Publishing annual reports with updated fisheries statistics.
- 400 Costa Rican boats using new technologies which improve profitability and reduce impacts in the ecosystem.

- Influencing policy to leverage large pelagics fisheries at decision-making level.
- Strengthening implementation of the FAO Port States Measures Agreement.
- Fostering fishermen and sport-fishing sector skills and organization to improve business capacities and political representation.

- Costa Rican stand promoting sustainable and high-quality seafood products of large pelagic species at the main international seafood shows.
- "Pura Vida" seafood branding developed for Costa Rican fishing products.
- National inter-ministerial and intersectoral campaign to increase domestic and responsible seafood consumption.

### Supporting Partners





## Sustainable Fisheries National Platform achievements:

- It has created a multi-stakeholder platform that is government-led and warrants a strong commitment from exporters and longline fishing organizations.
- First Fisheries National Action Plan under a democratic dialogue.
- First Fishery Improvement Project in Costa Rica.
- Fishermen are using satellite oceanographic information to improve catches, while mitigating impact on ecosystems and fighting against illegal fishing.

# Voices from the Ocean



"We think the sector should always be a major player in the dialogue, and that's why we're participating in the platform. Because the most important thing is for all the sectors to come together at a single point to dialogue, and that's the challenge we see as fishers and the responsibility to carry out sustainable fisheries. Other countries have already taken measures to look for responsible fishery projects. You have to adapt to new demands and new markets".

**Robert Nunes, Boat owner and member of the board of National Longline Fishing Chamber.**

"The Plan for Sustainable Fisheries of Large Pelagics has an important adaptation approach in environmental terms, as it will be the aim in the next ten years to increase the capacity of sustainable fisheries to adapt to the risks of climate change and natural disasters".

**Duayner Salas, Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade, Costa Rica.**



"Combined with the changes that the National Action Plan demands for, we believe that by gathering and sharing scientific knowledge and communicating to the supply chain actors what is happening and what still needs to be done, we will feed into our supply chain funding model, which will help to create positive changes on the ocean and in government policy-making and enforcement."

**Chris Wirges, Chefs Trading.**