

PIFSC Report on the Logbook Program for the American Samoa Longline Fishery October – December 2013¹

Fisheries Research and Monitoring Division
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The American Samoa longline fishery continues to experience extremely challenging conditions. Catch of its primary target species, albacore tuna remains at a record low level, in comparison with long term averages. In the 4th quarter, catches of most other marketable species also continued to be lower during 2013 than during 2014, as was the case in the earlier quarters of 2013. Increasing catches of low-volume-higher-priced species, such as mahimahi and yellowfin tuna, may indicate a gradual adaptation of the fishery to target species that can be sold to local fresh fish markets where these species are preferred, and where higher prices are available than at the cannery.

A summary of the fishery's catch and effort statistics for the fourth quarter of 2013, based on date of haul, is provided in Table 1. This table was derived from all logbook data submitted to the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, by February 19, 2013. Table 1 reflects data from an estimated 100% of sets made during this quarter. Only large (>50ft in length) vessels participated in the fishery.

The American Samoa longline fleet reported about a third less fishing effort during the fourth quarter of 2013 than in the same quarter of 2012. There were only 19 active vessels, 13.6% less than during the fourth quarter of 2012 (Fig. 1). These 19 vessels made 728 sets and deployed 2,229,097 hooks, which was 32.5% fewer sets (Fig. 2) and 29.4% less hooks (Fig. 3) than recorded in the same quarter of 2012. However, the number of hooks per set increased to an average of 3,061 hooks/set (up 4.6% from 2,928 hooks per set in the fourth quarter of 2012). Increasing the number of hooks per set is common in longline fisheries attempting to improve catch per day of operation.

With the exception of mahimahi, the number of fish caught decreased for all species individually and as a whole in comparison with the fourth quarter of 2012. A total of 27,205 fish were caught (all species combined), which was 64.3% less than during the fourth quarter of 2012 (Fig. 4). The main target species, albacore tuna, dominated the catch as usual (60.5% of the total catch). The 16,445 albacore caught during the fourth quarter of 2013 represent a 55.6% reduction from the 37,012 albacore caught in the same quarter of 2012 (Fig. 5).

Other species and groups showing lower catches in the fourth quarter of 2013 include: skipjack tuna (93.6% less, Fig. 7), yellowfin tuna (1.1% less, Fig. 8), bigeye tuna (58.8% less, Fig. 6), wahoo (24.4% less, Fig. 10), and billfishes (46.4% less, Fig. 11). Only the decrease in shark catch (41.7% less, Fig. 12), is considered a positive development for this fishery, because they are a nuisance catch, not retained, and discouraged by NMFS bycatch reduction policy.

During the fourth quarter of 2013 catches of mahimahi increased significantly (up 171.4%, Fig. 9), and there was only a minor decrease in catches of yellowfin tuna (1.1%, Fig. 8). The overall catch per unit of effort (CPUE, number of fish of all species per 1000 hooks) decreased substantially (49.4%) during the fourth quarter of 2013, compared with the same quarter of 2012. The fishery caught an average of just 12.2 fish/1000 hooks, as opposed to 24.1 fish/1000 hooks the previous year (Fig. 13). CPUE increased for yellowfin, wahoo and mahimahi, all of which represent a minor component of the catch, while CPUE for the most targeted species decreased. CPUE of the primary target species, albacore, decreased by 37% (Fig. 14); and CPUE for the second most targeted species, skipjack tuna, decreased by 90.9% (Fig. 16). Bigeye tuna CPUE decreased 42.2% (Fig. 15) and billfish CPUE decreased

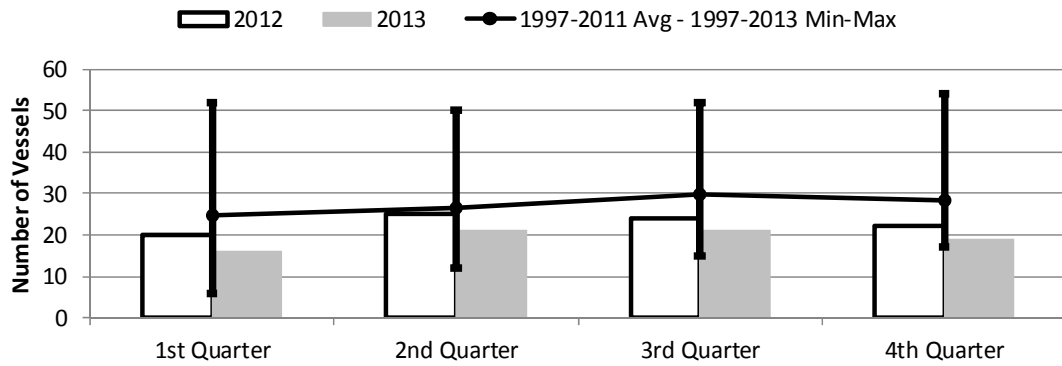
¹ PIFSC Data Report DR-14-005
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24.2% (Fig. 20). Shark CPUE declined by 18.6% (Fig. 21). CPUE for the yellowfin tuna preferred by the local fresh fish market increased 40.2% (Fig. 17), wahoo CPUE increased 6.9% (Fig. 19), and mahimahi CPUE increased by 350% (Fig. 18). However, despite improvements in some minor components of the catch, the outstanding characteristic of the fishery in 2013 was the sustained decline in fishing activity and albacore landings.

Table 1. Summary of fish catch and nominal fishing effort by American Samoa Longline vessels during the fourth quarter of 2013 based on longline logbooks processed as February 19, 2013.

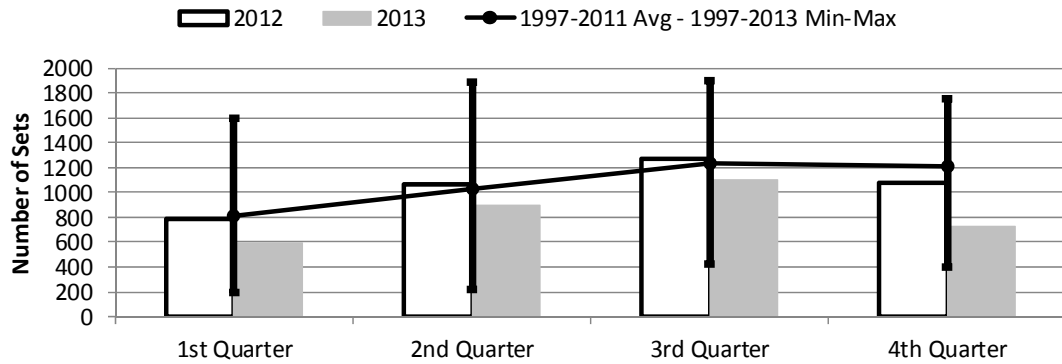
TRIP INFORMATION				
	Number of Vessels:		19	
	Number of Trips:		25	
	Number of Sets:		728	
	1000's of Hooks Set:		2,229	
	Number of Light Sticks Used:		1,378	
CATCH INFORMATION				
Species	Number Caught	Number Kept	Number Released	Number Caught per 1000 Hooks
BILLFISH				
Blue marlin	316	184	132	0.14
Striped marlin	42	36	6	0.02
Sailfish	28	13	15	0.01
Spearfish	88	5	83	0.04
Swordfish	85	54	31	0.04
TOTAL BILLFISH	559	292	267	0.25
SHARKS				
Blue shark	430	1	429	0.19
Shortfin mako shark	66	0	66	0.03
Thresher shark	53	0	53	0.02
White tip oceanic shark	170	0	170	0.08
Sharks (unknown)	67	0	67	0.03
TOTAL SHARKS	786	1	785	0.35
TUNA				
Albacore tuna	16,445	16,426	19	7.38
Bigeye tuna	581	580	1	0.26
Bluefin tuna	13	13	0	0.01
Skipjack tuna	1,715	1,681	34	0.77
Yellowfin tuna	3,022	3,016	6	1.36
TOTAL TUNA	21,776	21,716	60	9.77
OTHER PELAGICS				
Mahimahi	209	195	14	0.09
Moonfish	93	31	62	0.04
Oilfish	1,889	46	1,843	0.85
Pomfret	141	12	129	0.06
Wahoo	1,731	1,691	40	0.78
TOTAL OTHER PELAGICS	4,063	1,975	2,088	1.82
NON-PMUS				
Pelagic fishes (unknown)	21	0	21	0.01
TOTAL NON-PMUS	21	0	21	0.01
TOTAL ALL SPECIES	27,205	23,984	3,221	12.20

Figure 1. American Samoa Longline Vessels Submitting Logs by Quarter for



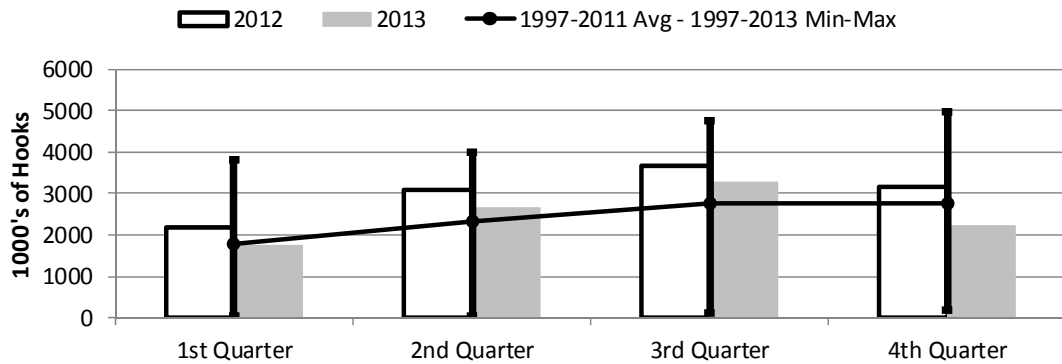
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	16	21	21	19
2012	20	25	24	22
1997-2013 Max	52	50	52	54
1997-2011 Avg	24	26	29	28
1997-2013 Min	6	12	15	17

Figure 2. Number of Sets by American Samoa Longline Vessels by Quarter for



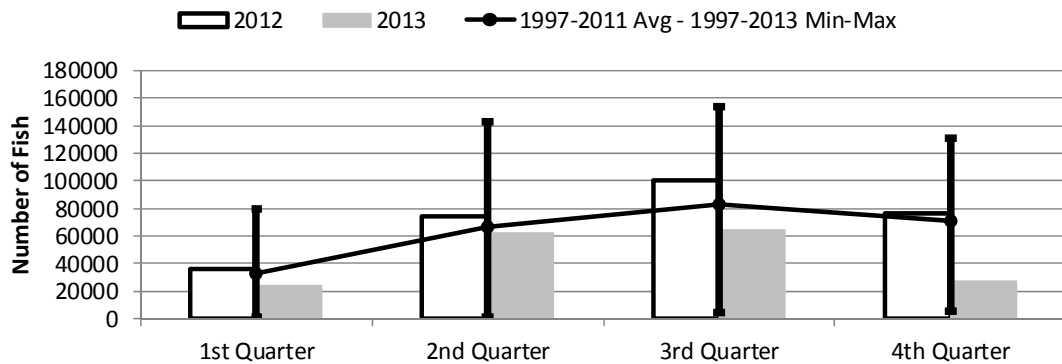
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	598	895	1,103	728
2012	788	1,069	1,273	1,078
1997-2013 Max	1,602	1,886	1,904	1,759
1997-2011 Avg	814	1,030	1,237	1,209
1997-2013 Min	192	223	424	401

Figure 3. Number of Hooks Set by the American Samoa Longline Fleet by Quarter for



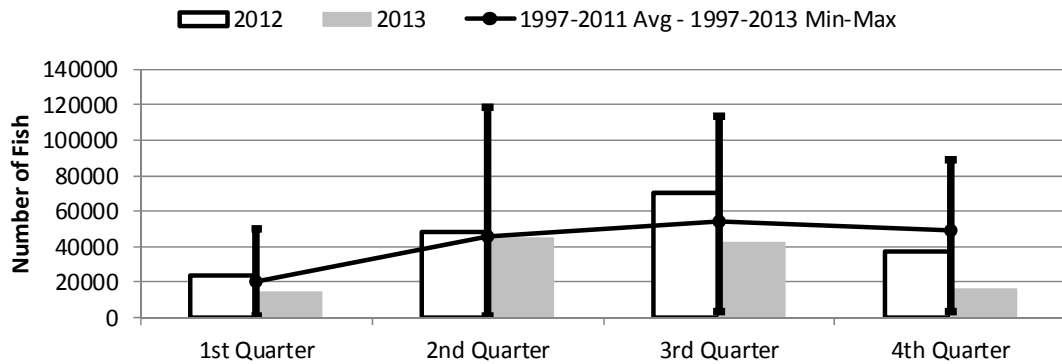
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	1,753	2,663	3,271	2,229
2012	2,194	3,101	3,656	3,156
1997-2013 Max	3,805	3,995	4,769	4,985
1997-2011 Avg	1,789	2,331	2,766	2,770
1997-2013 Min	41	50	101	175

Figure 4. American Samoa Longline Total Catch (All Species) by Quarter for



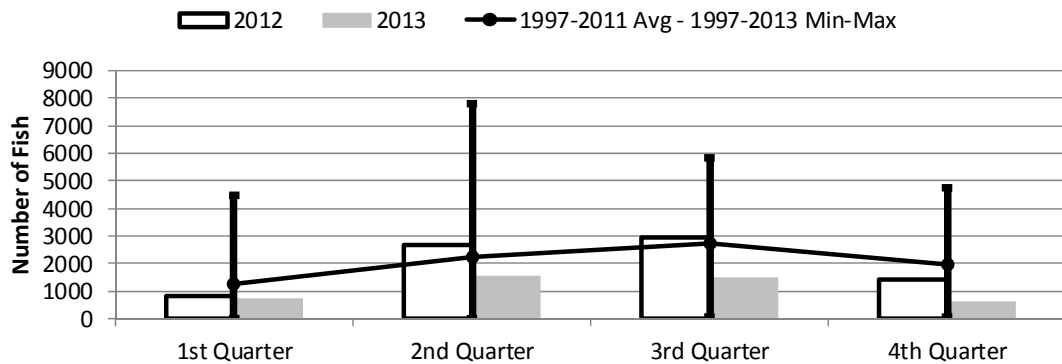
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	24,195	61,813	64,414	27,205
2012	35,897	73,742	100,599	76,135
1997-2013 Max	79,588	142,603	153,301	130,238
1997-2011 Avg	33,018	66,896	83,147	70,771
1997-2013 Min	1,315	1,416	4,127	5,201

Figure 5. American Samoa Longline Albacore Catch by Quarter for



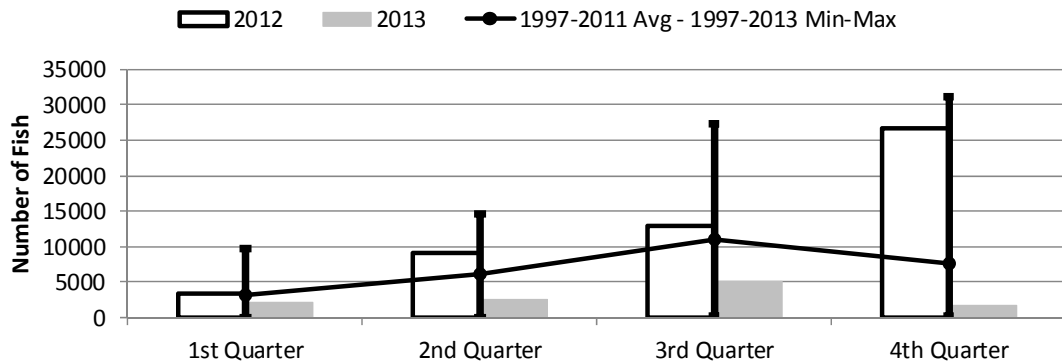
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	14,122	44,706	42,282	16,445
2012	23,443	48,162	70,665	37,012
1997-2013 Max	50,382	118,994	113,831	89,389
1997-2011 Avg	20,518	46,175	54,038	49,501
1997-2013 Min	940	851	3,182	3,465

Figure 6. American Samoa Longline Bigeye Tuna Catch by Quarter for



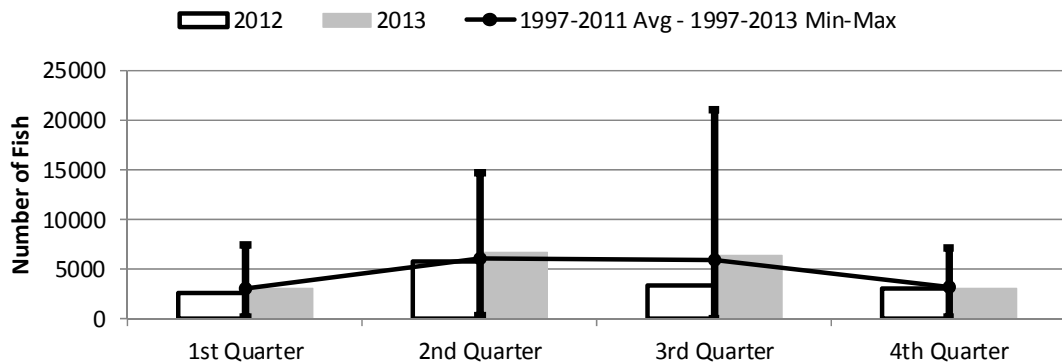
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	690	1,513	1,463	581
2012	800	2,651	2,965	1,410
1997-2013 Max	4,470	7,785	5,824	4,728
1997-2011 Avg	1,267	2,240	2,719	1,956
1997-2013 Min	6	26	55	55

Figure 7. American Samoa Longline Skipjack Tuna Catch by Quarter for



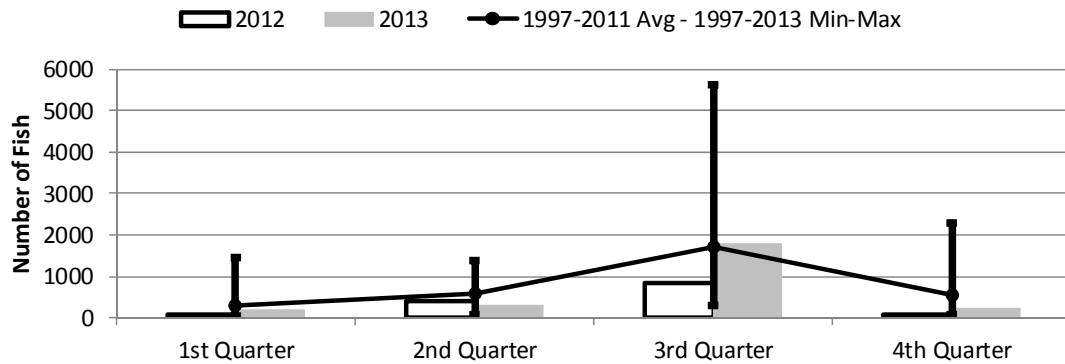
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	2,179	2,459	5,187	1,715
2012	3,307	9,040	12,894	26,753
1997-2013 Max	9,801	14,606	27,234	31,191
1997-2011 Avg	3,224	6,118	10,978	7,625
1997-2013 Min	116	6	244	178

Figure 8. American Samoa Longline Yellowfin Tuna Catch by Quarter for



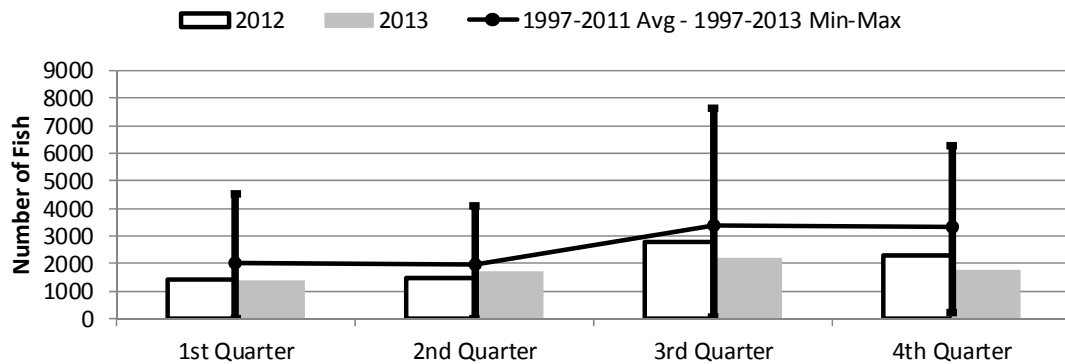
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	2,995	6,688	6,391	3,022
2012	2,530	5,705	3,300	3,056
1997-2013 Max	7,426	14,681	20,993	7,104
1997-2011 Avg	3,000	6,093	5,922	3,205
1997-2013 Min	213	356	84	177

Figure 9. American Samoa Mahimahi Catch by Quarter for



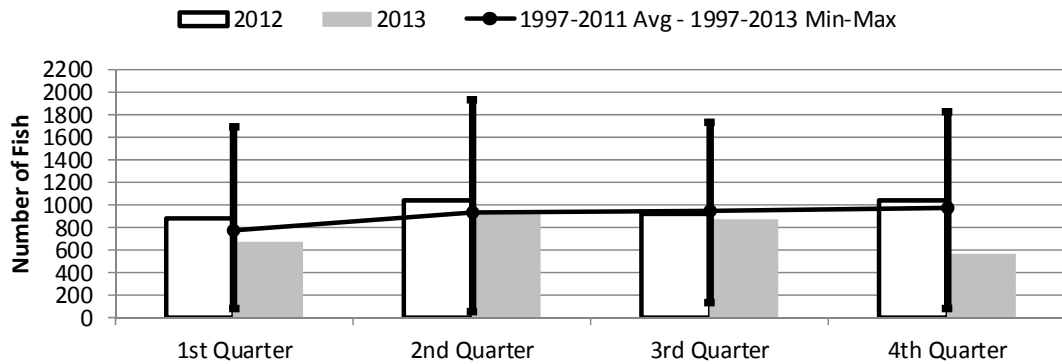
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	188	280	1,767	209
2012	93	417	838	77
1997-2013 Max	1,454	1,392	5,642	2,297
1997-2011 Avg	280	578	1,706	563
1997-2013 Min	30	59	280	77

Figure 10. American Samoa Wahoo Catch by Quarter for



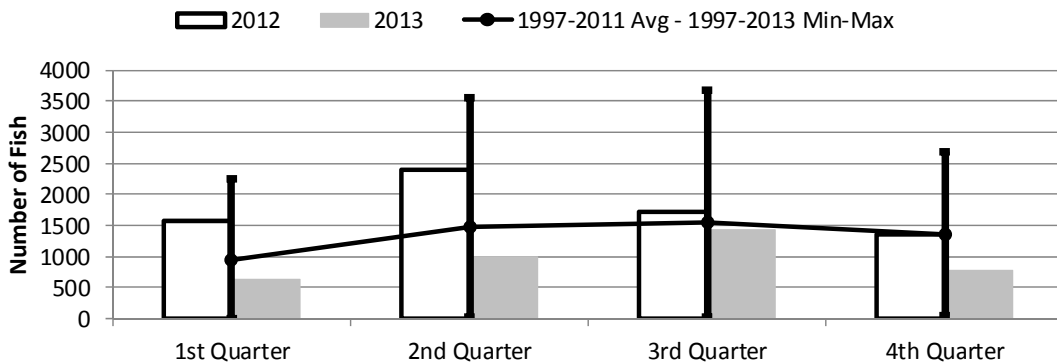
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	1,347	1,671	2,201	1,731
2012	1,413	1,472	2,768	2,290
1997-2013 Max	4,524	4,076	7,629	6,281
1997-2011 Avg	2,018	1,951	3,352	3,349
1997-2013 Min	27	20	68	210

Figure 11. American Samoa Billfish Catch by Quarter for



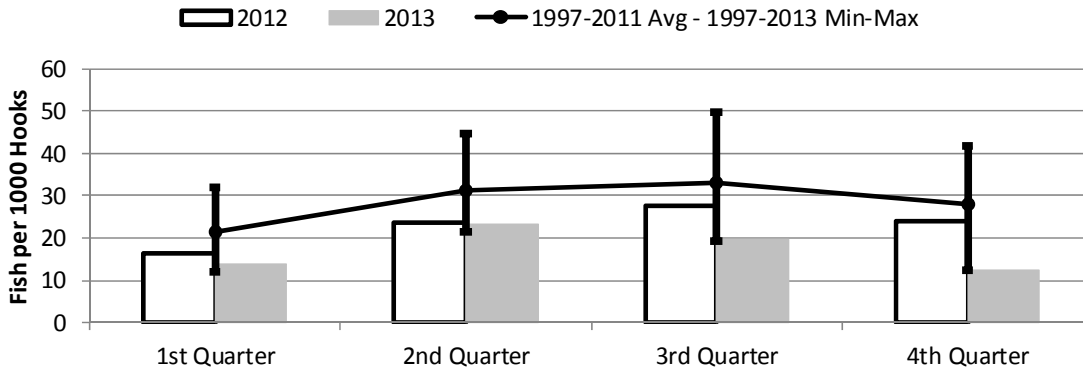
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	669	950	861	559
2012	875	1,045	923	1,043
1997-2013 Max	1,692	1,934	1,729	1,819
1997-2011 Avg	766	931	939	974
1997-2013 Min	83	58	132	84

Figure 12. American Samoa Shark Catch by Quarter for



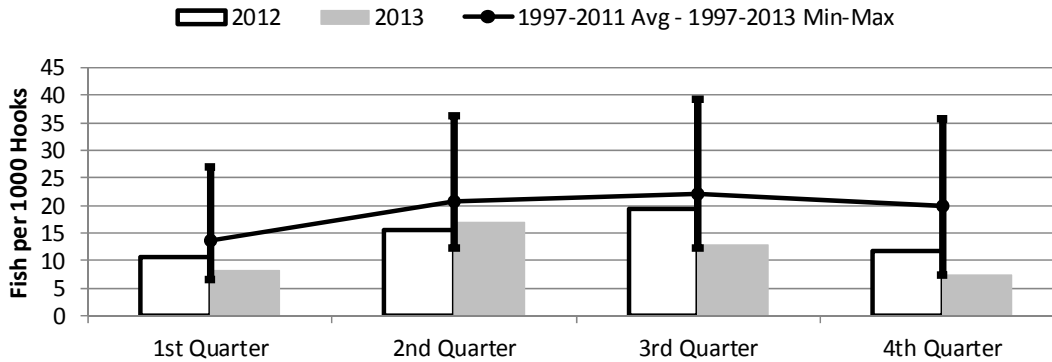
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	635	990	1,421	786
2012	1,565	2,405	1,723	1,349
1997-2013 Max	2,260	3,562	3,686	2,697
1997-2011 Avg	941	1,473	1,562	1,366
1997-2013 Min	5	16	26	49

Figure 13. American Samoa Longline Total Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



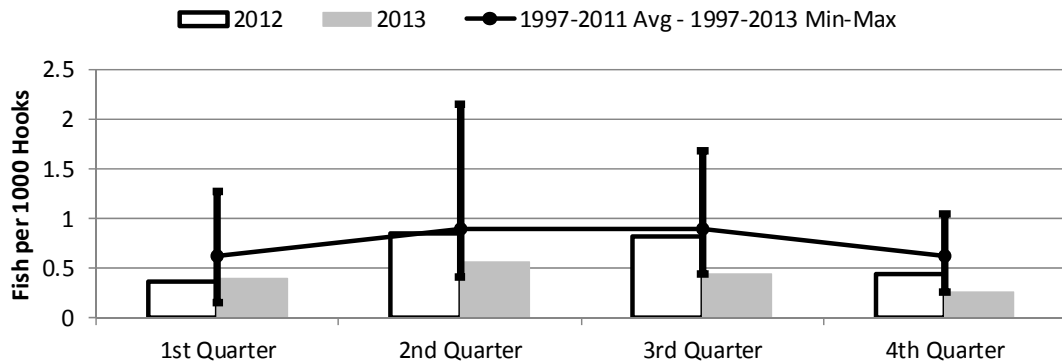
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	13.80	23.21	19.69	12.20
2012	16.36	23.78	27.52	24.12
1997-2013 Max	31.98	44.76	49.87	41.86
1997-2011 Avg	21.38	31.12	33.04	27.85
1997-2013 Min	12.02	21.57	19.20	12.20

Figure 14. American Samoa Longline Albacore Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



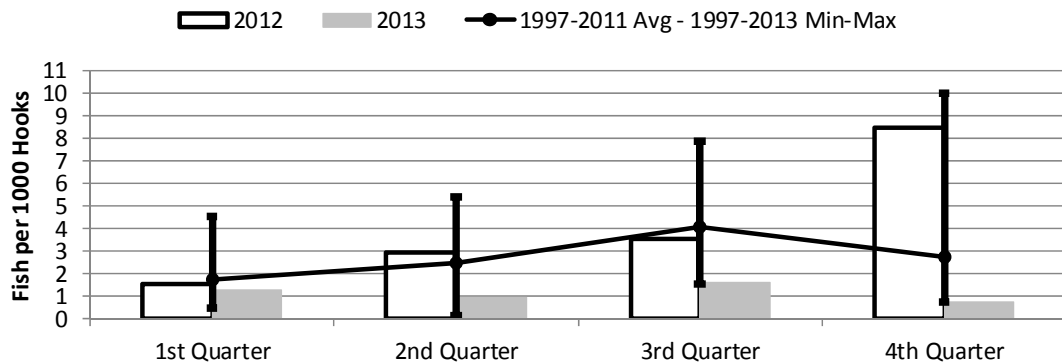
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	8.06	16.79	12.92	7.38
2012	10.68	15.53	19.33	11.72
1997-2013 Max	27.01	36.18	39.13	35.75
1997-2011 Avg	13.71	20.82	21.96	19.96
1997-2013 Min	6.58	12.21	12.14	7.38

Figure 15. American Samoa Longline Bigeye Tuna Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



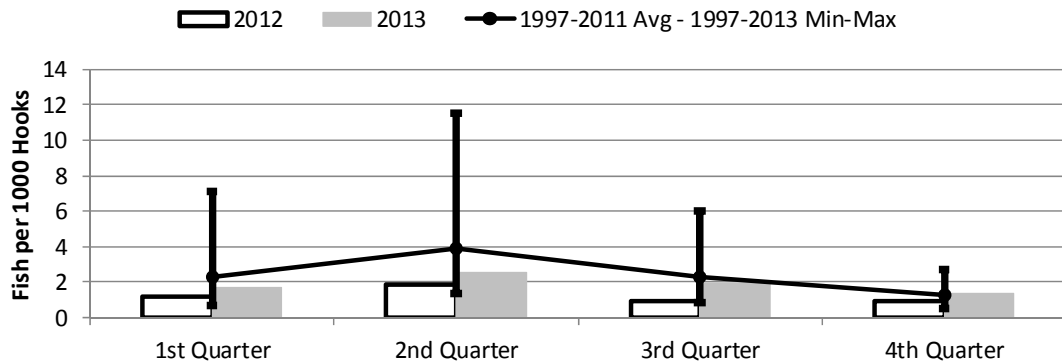
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	0.39	0.57	0.45	0.26
2012	0.36	0.85	0.81	0.45
1997-2013 Max	1.27	2.15	1.68	1.05
1997-2011 Avg	0.62	0.90	0.89	0.63
1997-2013 Min	0.15	0.41	0.45	0.26

Figure 16. American Samoa Longline Skipjack Tuna Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



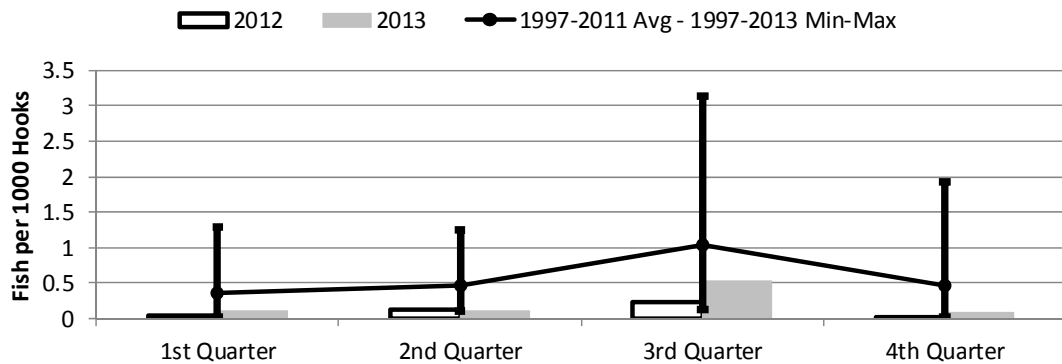
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	1.24	0.92	1.59	0.77
2012	1.51	2.92	3.53	8.47
1997-2013 Max	4.56	5.39	7.84	9.98
1997-2011 Avg	1.71	2.47	4.08	2.72
1997-2013 Min	0.44	0.12	1.56	0.77

Figure 17. American Samoa Yellowfin Tuna Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



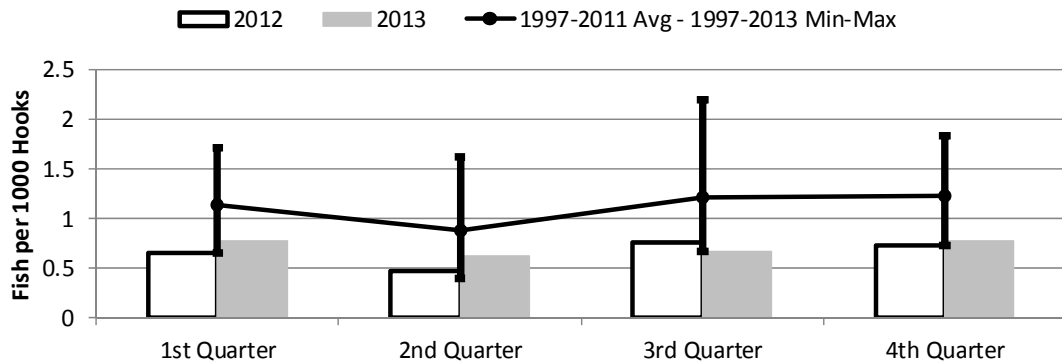
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	1.71	2.51	1.95	1.36
2012	1.15	1.84	0.90	0.97
1997-2013 Max	7.11	11.51	6.04	2.76
1997-2011 Avg	2.31	3.90	2.27	1.24
1997-2013 Min	0.66	1.34	0.83	0.55

Figure 18. American Samoa Longline Mahimahi Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



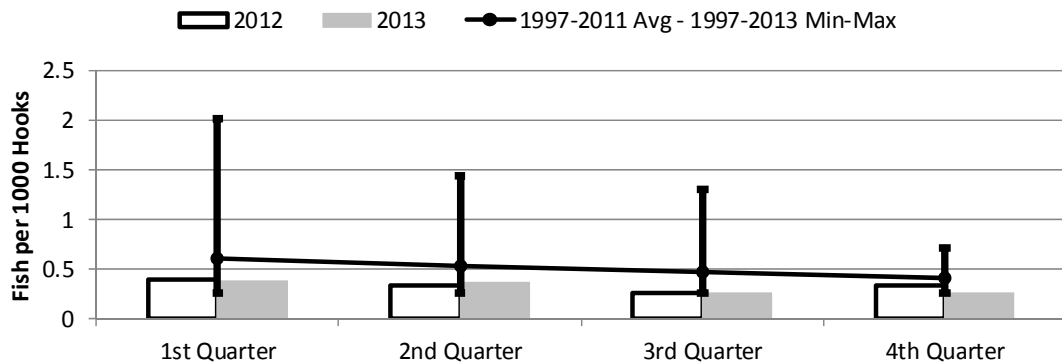
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	0.11	0.11	0.54	0.09
2012	0.04	0.13	0.23	0.02
1997-2013 Max	1.30	1.25	3.13	1.93
1997-2011 Avg	0.35	0.47	1.04	0.47
1997-2013 Min	0.02	0.10	0.14	0.02

Figure 19. American Samoa Wahoo Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



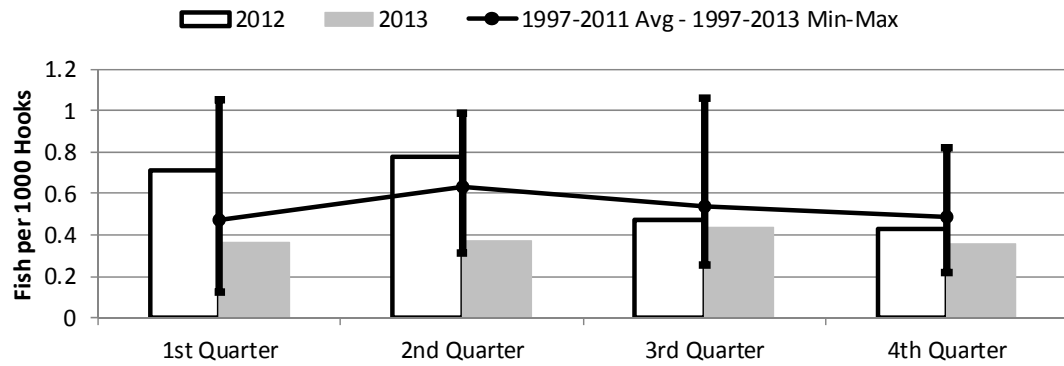
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	0.77	0.63	0.67	0.78
2012	0.64	0.47	0.76	0.73
1997-2013 Max	1.71	1.62	2.20	1.83
1997-2011 Avg	1.13	0.88	1.22	1.22
1997-2013 Min	0.64	0.39	0.67	0.73

Figure 20. American Samoa Billfish Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	0.38	0.36	0.26	0.25
2012	0.40	0.34	0.25	0.33
1997-2013 Max	2.02	1.44	1.31	0.71
1997-2011 Avg	0.60	0.53	0.46	0.41
1997-2013 Min	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25

Figure 21. American Samoa Shark Catch per 1000 Hooks by Quarter for



	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2013	0.36	0.37	0.43	0.35
2012	0.71	0.78	0.47	0.43
1997-2013 Max	1.05	0.99	1.06	0.82
1997-2011 Avg	0.47	0.63	0.53	0.49
1997-2013 Min	0.12	0.31	0.26	0.22