

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INDONESIA, INDUSTRIAL TUNA FISHERIES, 1900 – 2012

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Abstract

Indonesia in 2012 will catch above 0.5 million tonnes of tuna and a further 0.4 million tonnes of tuna-like species. This represents 11% of the total world tuna catch and makes Indonesia the largest catching nation, a position previously held by Japan. Indonesia plays a major role in the world tuna market due primarily to catches from within its own large expanse of tropical seas. The origins of the industrialization of the Indonesia tuna fleet can be traced to the distant water fleets of first Japan, between 1905 to 1985, and more recently Taiwan from 1985 to 2005. Today, however, most tuna fishing and processing companies are Indonesian owned and predominantly manned by Indonesian management and crew. A few longline companies retain their Japanese and Taiwanese ties. Taking fish from Indonesian waters is restricted to Indonesian citizens. The government has played a major role in the development of this industry, Indonesia, second most important fish industry after shrimp. Some would argue that the involvement of four of Indonesia, six State-owned fishing companies in the tuna business stifled the development of the private sector in this industry. The paper traces the historical development of the Indonesian tuna industry over the past century highlighting the role played by Japanese, Taiwanese, Philippine, European and domestic, mostly Indonesian Chinese, companies and of the government in promoting this large and diverse fishing and processing industry, particularly important to the economic development of eastern Indonesia.