

# Identification and quantification of tuna species in canned tunas with sunflower medium by means of a technique based on front face fluorescence spectroscopy (FFFS)

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1	Identification and quantification of tuna species in canned tunas with sunflower		
2	medium by means of a technique based on Front Face Fluorescence		
3	Spectroscopy (FFFS)		
4			
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#### Abstract

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The authenticity of tuna is now of great importance in the multi-step food chain, from on farm production to consumer consumption. A technique based on the use of front face fluorescence spectroscopy (FFFS) was employed to authenticate tuna species in canned tuna produced at the pilot scale with sunflower oil medium: skipjack tuna (Katsuwonus pelamis), yellowfin tuna (Thunnus albacares) and bigeye tuna (Thunnus obesus). Tryptophan residues, aromatic amino acids and nucleic acids (AAA+NA), riboflavin, nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NADH) and vitamin A spectra were recorded on 232 canned tunas. When Factorial Discriminant Analysis (FDA) was applied to the different intrinsic probes, the classification rates were not satisfactory. Therefore, the first five principal components (PCs) of the PCA extracted from each intrinsic probe was pooled into a single matrix and analysed again by FDA. Correct classification amounting to 74.6% was observed on the calibration data sets. The established models tested on 30 unknown commercial canned tunas illustrated 40% rate of mislabeling. The tuna cans labelled as skipjack species were 100% correctly classified, while those labelled as yellowfin and bigeye tunas seemed to be adulterated since for: i) tuna cans labelled as bigeye, skipjack species were detected; and ii) tuna labelled as yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack and mixtures of yellowfin and skipjack and yellowfin and bigeye were found.

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42 **Keywords**: Bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*),

43 Skipjack tuna (Katsuwonus pelamis), Front face fluorescence spectroscopy,

44 authentication, quantification, chemometric.

#### 1. Introduction:

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health benefits associated to the high polyunsaturated fatty acids content. Moreover, fish presents the main source of protein in many parts of the world. Canned fish represents a central item of the French diet, with an apparent yearly consumption of 118,000 tons in 2015, of which canned tuna represents the lion's share (55.5%) (FranceAgriMer, 2016). Among the different species of tuna, the most used in canning industry are yellowfin tuna (Thunnus albacares), bigeye tuna (Thunnus obesus) and skipjack tuna (Katsuwonus pelamis). In addition to brine, sunflower oil is usually adopted as liquid medium due to both its protective action and low price compared to olive oil. In fact, sunflower oil leads to isolate the product from the air which helps to ensure a more palatable product. Tuna is among the most acclaimed fish by consumers. Nowadays, the identification of tuna species in seafood products is of paramount importance. Generally, canned tuna are produced from frozen tuna fillets imported from different countries. This make difficult to differentiate between species visually, inducing some errors in the labelling of canned products. To protect consumers from economic deception, the authentication of tuna species becomes more and more important. Although, unintentional and intentional substitution tuna species are strictly forbidden by EU Regulation 1536/92, several studies reported recently that canned tunas of high price such as bluefin tuna could be adulterated with cheaper ones like skipjack tuna (Sotelo et al., 2018). Several methodologies have been used to authenticate canned tuna. Among them, we can cited TaqMan-based qPCR (Chuang, Chen, and Shiao 2012; Bojolly et al. 2017), electrical properties (Etienne et al., 2000) and nucleotide sequence (Paine, McDowell, & Graves, 2007). DNA-based techniques were recently used by Sotelo et

Interest in fish consumption has increased in recent years due to the wide range of

al., (2018) in a survey at authenticating tuna species in food products sold on EU market and a mislabelling level ranging from 50% to 100% were found. Today, the most promising technique used for the authentication of food products is the profiling approach that does not have the ability to differentiate between the different analytes present in a food product but gives rapid information based on the collected information (Karoui, et al., 2006; Karoui, Downey, & Blecker, 2010; Karoui & Blecker, 2011). Among these techniques, we can mention front face fluorescence spectroscopy (FFFS), near and mid infrared. Nowadays, the industry is looking for these rapid analytical techniques that could be used on-line and/or at-line in the seafood industry. For example, FFFS has been applied for: i) monitoring the freshness of different fish species (Karoui, Thomas, and Dufour 2006; Hassoun and Karoui 2016), ii) discriminating between fresh and frozen-thawed fish (Karoui, Hassoun, & Ethuin, 2017); additionally infrared spectroscopy has been used successfully to differentiate between fresh and frozen thawed fillet tunas (Reis et al., 2017).

Despite the numerous studies related to the use of spectroscopic technique for the authentication of sea food products, at our best knowledge, no investigation has assessed the potential of FFFS to authenticate species in canned tuna. Thus, the objective of the present study was to investigate the potentiality of FFFS to authenticate species in canned tunas produced at the pilot scale with sunflower oil medium with only one tuna specie (skipjack: *Katsuwonus pelamis*, yellowfin: *Thunnus albacares* or bigeye tuna: *Thunnus obesus*) or a binary mixture ratios varying between 1 and 99%.

## 2. Materials and methods

## 2.1 Canned tuna

Two hundred and thirty-two (232) cans were prepared by the innovation platform for aquatic products (Plateforme d'Innovation Nouvelles Vagues (PFINV), Boulogne sur Mer, France) using the process technology applied in the canning industry. Entire individuals of bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tuna originated from Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans were identified according to morphological characters using identification keys from the FAO Species Catalogue (Collette & Nauen, 1983).

Can samples containing the aforementioned tuna species were prepared by PFINV using the technique applied in the canning industry to obtain standardised cans. The frozen tuna fillets were thawed to a temperature between 0 and 2 °C. Tins (diameter = 55 mm, 1/12 can) were filled with 80 g of flesh and sunflower oil. The flesh has previously pre-cooked in vacuum bags (steam oven 80 °C until the flesh centre reaches 65 °C). Cans were crimped and sterilised at 116 °C to the sterilising value of 7 min.

To imitate involuntary and voluntary rate substitutions in canned tuna, tuna cans of different mixtures of bigeye /yellowfin, bigeye /skipjack and yellowfin /skipjack with ratios varying from 1 to 99% (**Table 1**) were prepared. The 232 tuna samples were used in the calibration process to establish models. The validation of the established models was determined on 30 commercial unknown tuna cans that were purchased randomly from local markets.

## 2.2. Fluorescence spectroscopy

The content of each canned tuna was transferred into 250 ml plastic beaker; then, the tuna sample was homogenised by using homogeniser (T 25 digital ULTRA-TURRAX®, IKA) with a speed of 10000 rpm for 5 minutes, according to the method

described by Srikornkarn & Sirisomboon (2014). Approximately 3 g of the obtained sample was poured in a 3 ml quartz cuvette and fluorescence spectra were recorded using a Fluoromax-4 spectrofluorometer (Jobin Yvon, Horiba, NJ, USA). The incidence angle of the excitation radiation was set at 60° to ensure that reflected light, scattered radiation, and depolarisation phenomena were minimised. The spectrofluorometer was equipped with a thermostated cell and the temperature was controlled by a Haake A25 AC 200 temperature controller (Thermo-Scientific. France). The emission spectra of aromatic amino acids and nucleic acids (AAA+NA), tryptophan residues, nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NADH) and riboflavin spectra were recorded with the excitation wavelengths set at 250, 290, 340, 380 nm, respectively. The excitation spectra of vitamin A were acquired with the emission wavelength set at 410 nm. For each sample, 3 spectra were recorded.

## 2.3. Mathematical treatment of data

In order to reduce scattering effects and to compare samples, fluorescence spectra were normalised by reducing the area under each spectrum to a value of 1 according to others (Karoui, Dufour, & Baerdemaeker, 2006a; Karoui, Nicolaï, and de Baerdemaeker 2008; Leriche et al. 2004). Mainly the shift of the peak maximum and the peak width changes in the spectra were considered following this normalisation.

Then principal component analysis (PCA) was applied separately to each normalised spectral collection. The PCA transforms the original variables into new axes, or principal components (PCs). This statistical multivariate treatment was earlier used to observe similarities among different samples (Karoui, Lefur, et al. 2007; Karoui, Schoonheydt, et al. 2007) reducing the dimension to two or three PCs, while keeping most of the original information found in the data sets.

In a second step, FDA was performed on the first 5 PCs resulting from the
PCA applied to each fluorophore, containing more than 99% of total variance. FDA
assessed new synthetic variables called "discriminant factors", which were linear
combinations of the selected PCs, and allowed a better separation of the centres of
gravity of the considered groups. Each canned tuna, can be reallocated within one of
the defined groups. For each group, the distance from the various centres of gravity of
the groups is calculated. The canned tuna is assigned to the group where its distance
between the centres of gravity is the shortest. Comparison of the assigned group to the
real group is an indicator of the quality of the discrimination.

Then, the first 5 PCs of the PCA performed on each of the five data sets were pooled into one matrix, and this new table was analysed by the FDA (Karoui et al., 2004). The process consists of putting the PCs data sets of each fluorophore fluorescence spectra one beside the other in the same matrix to take into account the whole information collected. This concatenation approach helps to improve the discrimination of the investigated cans of tuna using different fluorophores, as well as to assess the ability of this technique to identify the contents of tuna cans: species and the amount of each tuna species in the case of binary mixture. The robustness of the established model from the concatenation technique was determined on 30 unknown commercial canned tunas.

All analyses were performed using XLSTAT 2014 (Addinsoft SARL USA, New York, NY, USA) software.

## 3. Results and discussion

## 3.1. Fluorescence spectra

The normalised tryptophan emission spectra recorded on canned tuna containing 100% bigeye, 100% yellowfin, 100% skipjack and their binary mixtures with different percentages are presented in Figs. 1a, 1b and 1c. These spectra exhibited maxima located ~373 nm corresponding to the maximum emission of tryptophan (Karoui & Hassoun, 2017). A slight red shift of the maximum emission of tryptophan as a function of tuna species and their mixture levels was noted. This shift could be explained by changes in the protein-protein, protein-lipid and/or proteinwater interactions, in agreement with the findings of Karoui, Dufour, et al., (2006a). These hypotheses were reinforced by the investigation of Rossi, Colonello, & Alamprese, (2001) reporting an interchange between fish lipid fraction and covering oil that induce some modifications in the tryptophan environment. The normalised AAA+NA emission spectra recorded on canned tuna containing 100% bigeye, 100% yellowfin, 100% skipjack, and their mixtures at different percentages are presented in Figs. 1Sa, b and c. The spectra exhibited a maximum located around 383 nm. It appeared that the shape of AAA+NA emission spectra was correlated with the composition of tuna cans (one species or a binary mixture), since a shift of the maximum emission of AAA+NA towards higher wavelengths was observed for tuna cans with a binary mixture regardless of the level of adulteration.

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**Figs. 2a, 2b and 2c** illustrate the emission spectra of NADH recorded on canned tunas. Again, it appeared that the shape of NADH emission spectra depends on the composition of tuna cans. For example, the maximum emission spectra observed ~ 470 nm for canned tunas containing skipjack and Y99/B01 shifted to: i) 475 nm for canned tunas composed of bigeye (100%) and S01/B99; ii) and to 478 nm for canned tunas with Y10/S90.

Although, the riboflavin emission spectra of canned tunas showed a maximum ~ 470 nm, the shape of the spectra varied according to the composition of canned tunas (**Figs. 3a, b and c**). The variations in the fluorescence intensity ~ 470 nm could be ascribed to the structural changes in riboflavin during sterilisation. This was in agreement with the findings of Karoui et al., (2017) reporting that lumichrome, a photo breakdown product from riboflavin contributes to the shape of fluorescence spectra in the 400–500 nm range.

**Figs. 4a, b and c** illustrate the normalised vitamin A excitation spectra acquired on canned tunas containing bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack and their mixtures. The spectra exhibited two maxima located ~ 292 and 337 nm varying with canned tuna contents. A clear visual differentiation can be observed between canned tunas according to their species. Indeed, different fluorescence intensities (FI) ratios (*F.I.*<sub>337 nm</sub>/*F.I.*<sub>292 nm</sub>) were observed as a function of tuna species since bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack canned tunas presented ratios of 0.94, 1.06 and 1.17, respectively. This could be explained by the difference in the molecular environment of vitamin A and/or solvent viscosity (Karoui, Dufour, & De Baerdemaeker, 2006b). One explanation could arise from the exchange that could be occurred between fat and water in the fish and the sunflower oil (Garcia-Arias et al., 1994).

From the obtained results, it appeared that  $F.I._{337 \text{ nm}}/F.I._{292 \text{ nm}}$  ratios could be considered as a valuable tool for differentiating between tuna species when used in a binary mixture in canned tunas.

# 3.2 Global analysis of the fluorescence spectral data sets recorded on different

## cans: concatenation technique

# 3.2.1. Development of calibration models for the authentication of tuna species in canned tunas

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The different data sets obtained following the excitation and emission wavelengths were gathered into one matrix and analysed by FDA. Indeed, each emission and excitation wavelength used in the present study contains specific information. For consequent, more information on canned tunas could be obtained by jointly analysing the different intrinsic probes. This method is known as the concatenation (Karoui et al. 2008).

The FDA was applied to the first 5 PCs resulting from the PCA performed on each intrinsic probe containing more than 99% of total variance. The similarity map, defined by the discriminant factors 1 and 2 accounting for 66.58% of the total variance showed a clear differentiation of tuna cans containing only one species from those made with a binary mixture of tuna species. Indeed, according to the discriminant factor 1, which took into account 52.14% of the total variance, tuna cans produced with 100% of bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack species were observed on the negative side, whereas the other tuna cans were located mostly on the positive side (**Fig. 5**). Overall correct classification rate amounting to 74.57% was obtained (**Table 1S**). Tuna cans containing binary mixtures (\$90/B10) were 100% correctly classified. Regarding canned tunas made with only one species, 79.17, 80.56 and 87.50% of correct classification was obtained for tuna cans containing bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack species, respectively. The low percentage of correct classification of tuna cans containing bigeye species could be explained by the fact that 6 out 96 spectra were classified as belonging to Y100, 3 spectra were assigned to Y75/B25 and 1 spectrum was ascribed to S10/B90. The obtained results were in agreement with the

findings obtained by Bojolly et al. (2017) and Unseld, Brandt, & Hiesel, (1995) who indicated that is difficult even impossible to differentiate between yellowfin and bigeye tuna species, especially at juvenile stage.

Regarding tuna cans containing binary mixture of bigeye and yellowfin species at different percentages, correct classification varying from 33.33% to 87.50% was obtained. The worst classification was observed for the Y95/B05 that could be explained by the fact that 10 spectra were ascribed to tuna cans containing yellowfin at a level of 99% (7 spectra to the Y99/S01 group and 3 spectra to Y99/B01 group). Correct classification rates amounting to 80.00% was observed for Y90/S10 group. When the amounts of skipjack tuna in the binary mixture were greater than 10%, correct classifications varying from 60% to 100% were obtained (**Table 1S**).

For economic consideration, it is well-known that yellowfin and albacore tuna cans were considered more susceptible to adulteration. Thus such finding seemed to suggest that FFFS could be used as a promising tool for skipjack tuna detection in yellowfin and albacore tunas. The obtained results, suggested that the methodology consisting in coupling fluorescence data sets into 1 table allowed more exhaustive identification of tuna species especially when used in a binary mixture.

# 3.2.2. Evaluation of the ability of the established model for the authentication and quantification of commercial tuna cans

The established model obtained on experimental tuna cans produced by PFINV with known tuna species was tested on 30 canned tunas purchased from local supermarket in France and labelled as bigeye tuna (n = 10), yellowfin tuna (n = 10) and skipjack tuna (n = 10).

The obtained results indicated that 40% of tuna can samples were mislabelled. The tuna cans labelled as skipjack tuna were completely (100%) correctly classified (**Table 1b**), in agreement with the findings of Bojolly et al. (2017) who by using qPCR method succeeded to differentiate 100% skipjack tuna cans from bigeye and yellowfin tuna cans. In our study, tuna cans labelled as bigeye were 70% correctly classified, with 3 out 10 tuna cans were ascribed to skipjack tuna samples. The worst classification was obtained for tuna cans labelled as yellowfin, since only 10% of correct classification was observed: 15 spectra were classified as belonging to bigeye, 7 spectra to Y75/S25 group, 4 spectra to skipjack and 1 spectrum as Y75/B25 group. From the obtained results, it could be concluded the presence of different species in tuna cans labelled as yellowfin and bigeye tunas or mislabeling during the production and processing, which the tuna canning industry would have to address.

### 4. Conclusion

Front face fluorescence spectroscopy (FFFS) along with chemometric tools (PCA and FDA) has demonstrated its ability to authenticate skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) and bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) that are the most species commonly used in canned tunas. The application of FDA to the concatenated intrinsic probes appeared to be a valuable technique to authenticate tuna species. A complete (100%) of correct classification was observed for skipjack tuna. The canned tunas labelled as yellowfin and bigeye were found to be misclassified indicating error labelling for these tuna species. The obtained results suggest that FFFS could be considered as a rapid and non-destructive screening tool to authenticate canned tunas. The technique could be used as on line screening tool for the authentication of canned tuna.

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List of tables: Table 1: (a) Details of canned tunas used for the calibration models and (b) the prediction of commercial unknown tuna cans Table 1S: Cross-validation table of concatenated fluorescence spectra (Tryptophan, aromatic amino acids and nucleic acids (AAA+NA), riboflavin, NADH and vitamin A) realised on canned tunas used for the establishment of models 

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## **List of figures:**

**Figure 1S:** Normalised aromatic amino acids and nucleic acids (AAA+NA) fluorescence spectra scanned on (a): tuna cans containing 100% bigeye species, 100% yellowfin species and a binary mixture of bigeye and yellowfin species with different percentages (b) tuna cans containing 100% yellowfin species, 100% skipjack species and a binary mixture of yellowfin and skipjack species with different percentages (c) tuna cans containing 100% skipjack species, 100% bigeye species and a binary mixture of skipjack and bigeye species with different percentages

Notes:

- The first letter is related to tuna species: B: Bigeye; S: Skipjack and Y: Yellowfin.
- The two numbers represent the percentage of tuna species in canned tuna
- The three numbers (100 %) indicated that canned tuna is produced with only 1 species

**Figure 1:** Normalised tryptophan fluorescence spectra recorded on (a): tuna cans containing 100% bigeye species, 100% yellowfin species and a binary mixture of bigeye and yellowfin species with different percentages (b) tuna cans containing 100% yellowfin species, 100% skipjack species and binary mixture of yellowfin and skipjack species with different percentages (c) tuna cans containing 100% skipjack species, 100% bigeye species and a binary mixture of skipjack and bigeye species with different percentages *Notes:* 

- The first letter is related to tuna species: B: Bigeye; S: Skipjack and Y: Yellowfin.
- The two numbers represent the percentage of tuna species in canned tuna
- The three numbers (100 %) indicated that canned tuna is produced with only 1 species

**Figure 2:** Normalised NADH fluorescence spectra recorded on (a): tuna cans containing 100% bigeye species, 100% yellowfin species and a binary mixture of bigeye and yellowfin species with different percentages (b) tuna cans containing 100% yellowfin species, 100% skipjack species and a binary mixture of yellowfin and skipjack species with different percentages (c) tuna cans containing 100% skipjack species, 100% bigeye species and a binary mixture of skipjack and bigeye species with different percentages *Notes:* 

- The first letter is related to tuna species: B: Bigeye; S: Skipjack and Y: Yellowfin.
- The two numbers represent the percentage of tuna species in canned tuna
- The three numbers (100 %) indicated that canned tuna is produced with only 1 species

**Figure 3:** Normalised riboflavin fluorescence spectra recorded on (a): tuna cans containing 100% bigeye species, 100% yellowfin species and a binary mixture of bigeye and yellowfin species with different percentages (b) tuna cans containing 100% yellowfin species, 100% skipjack species and a binary mixture of yellowfin and skipjack species with different percentages (c) tuna cans containing 100% skipjack species, 100% bigeye species and a binary mixture of skipjack and bigeye species with different percentages

- The first letter is related to tuna species: B: Bigeye; S: Skipjack and Y: Yellowfin.
- The two numbers represent the percentage of tuna species in canned tuna
- The three numbers (100 %) indicated that canned tuna is produced with only 1 species

**Figure 4:** Normalised vitamin A fluorescence spectra recorded on (a): tuna cans containing 100% bigeye species, 100% yellowfin species and a binary mixture of bigeye and yellowfin species with different percentages (b) tuna cans containing 100% yellowfin species, 100% skipjack species and a binary mixture of yellowfin and skipjack species with different percentages (c) tuna cans containing 100% skipjack species, 100% bigeye species and a binary mixture of skipjack and bigeye species with different percentages *Notes:* 

- The first letter is related to tuna species: B: Bigeye; S: Skipjack and Y: Yellowfin
- The two numbers represent the percentage of tuna species in canned tuna
- The three numbers (100 %) indicated that canned tuna is produced with only 1 species

**Figure 5:** Similarity map of the factorial discriminant analysis (FDA) determined by discriminant factors 1 (DF1) and 2 (DF2), applied on the 25 concatenated PCs which correspond to the first 5 PCs of the PCA performed on aromatic amino acids and nucleic acids (AAA+NA), tryptophan, NADH, riboflavin and vitamin A fluorescence spectra recorded on tuna cans containing: 100% bigeye species ( $\Delta$ ), 100% yellowfin species ( $\Delta$ ), 100% skipjack species ( $\Delta$ ), a binary mixture of skipjack and bigeye species with different percentages ( $\Delta$ ) and a binary mixture of yellowfin and skipjack species with different percentages ( $\Delta$ ).

Figure 1a

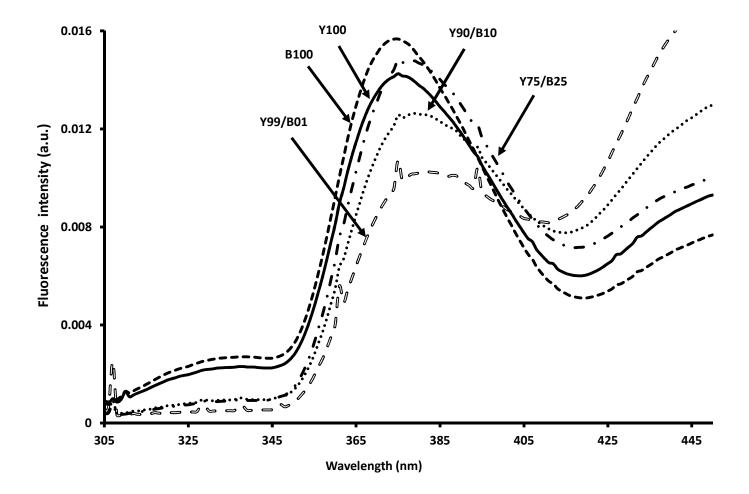


Figure 1b

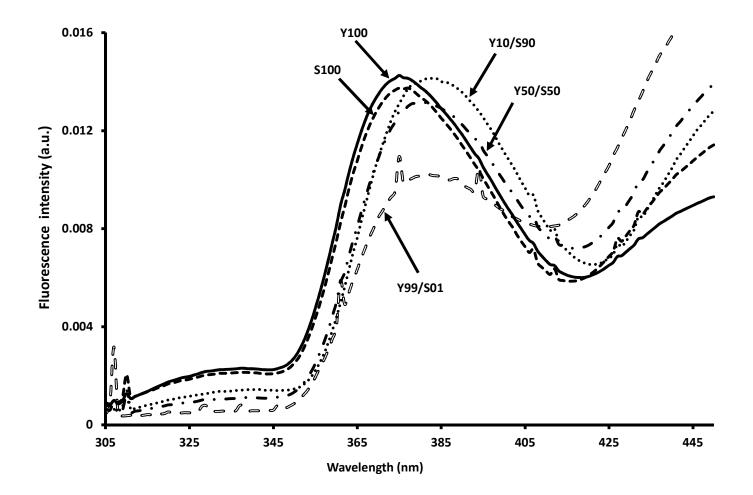


Figure 1c

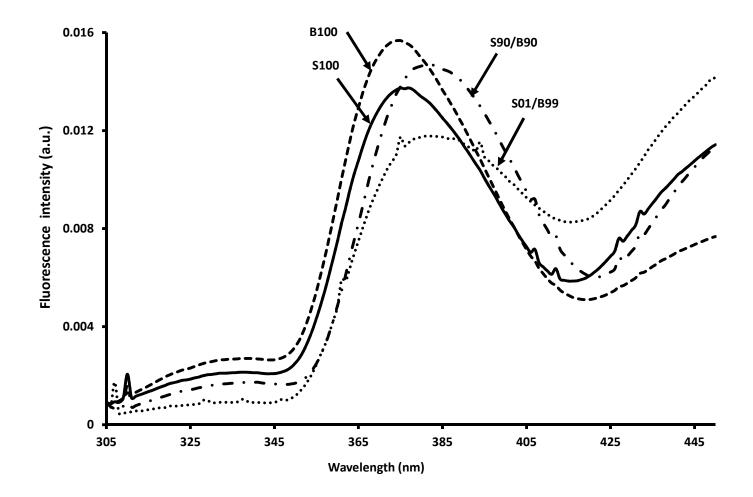


Figure 2a

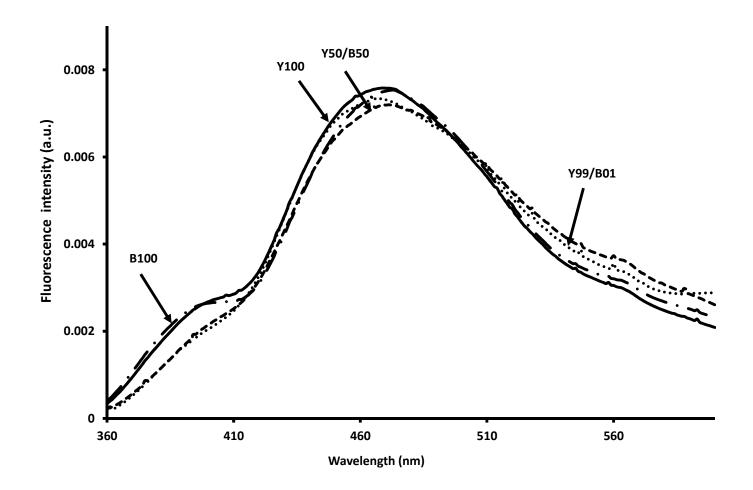


Figure 2b

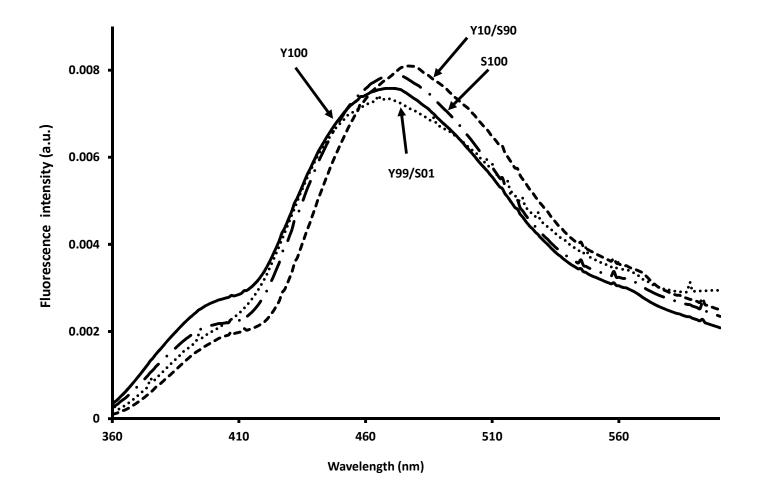


Figure 2c

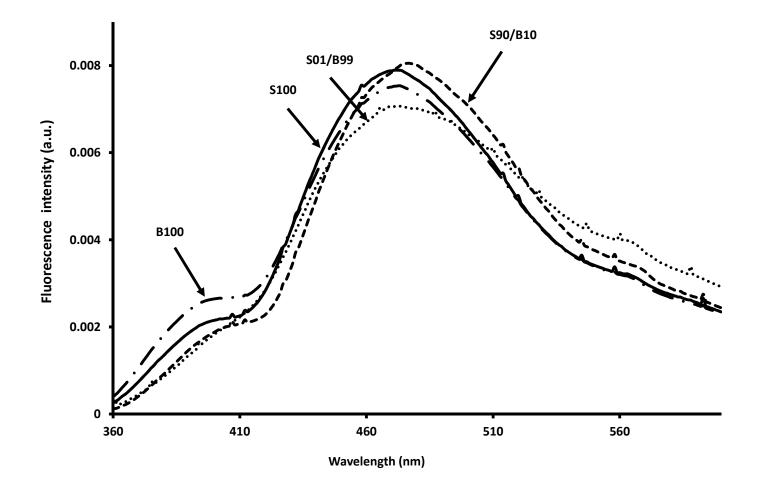


Figure 3a

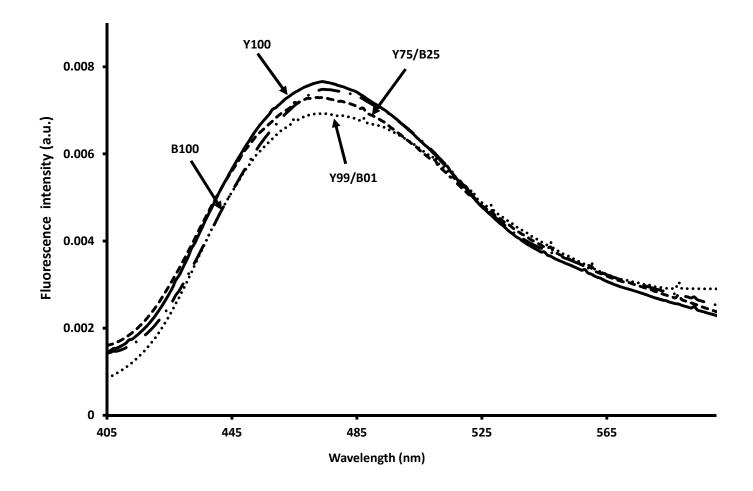


Figure 3b

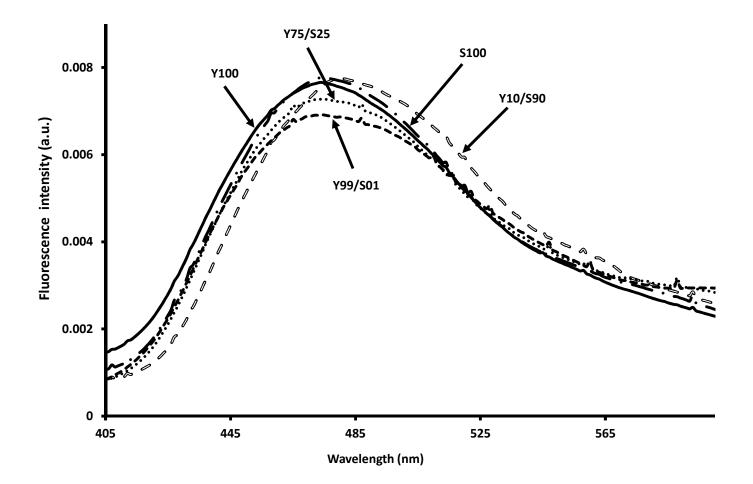


Figure 3c

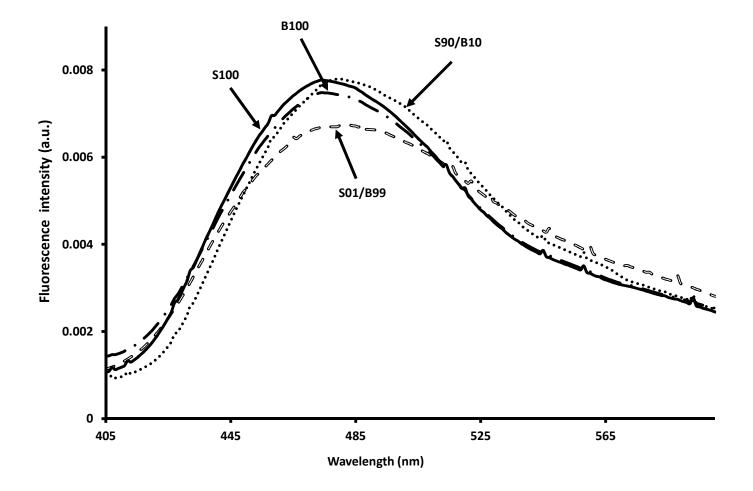


Figure 4a

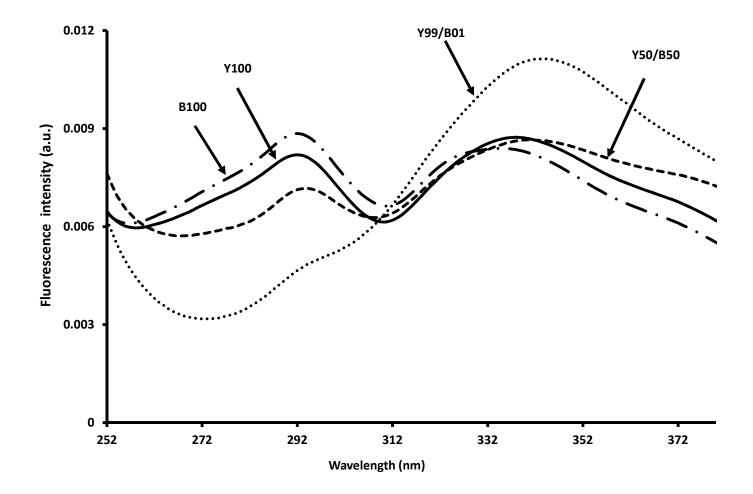


Figure 4b

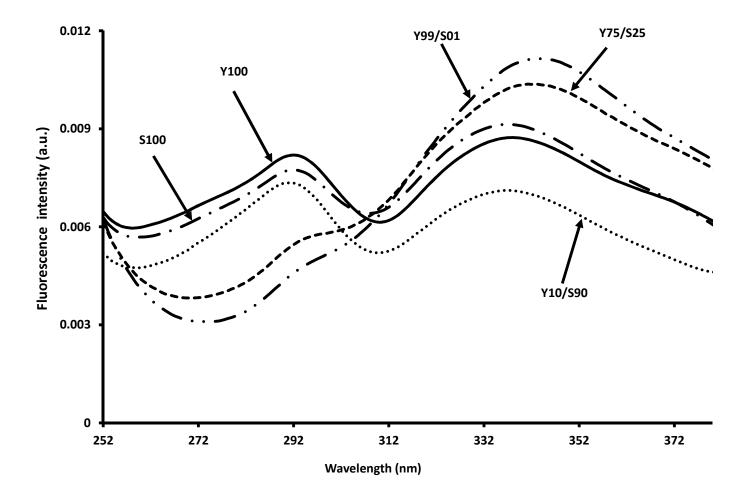


Figure 4c

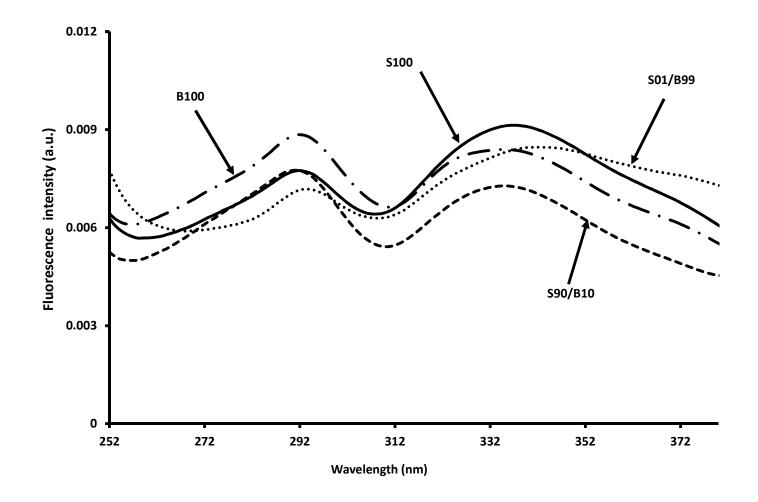
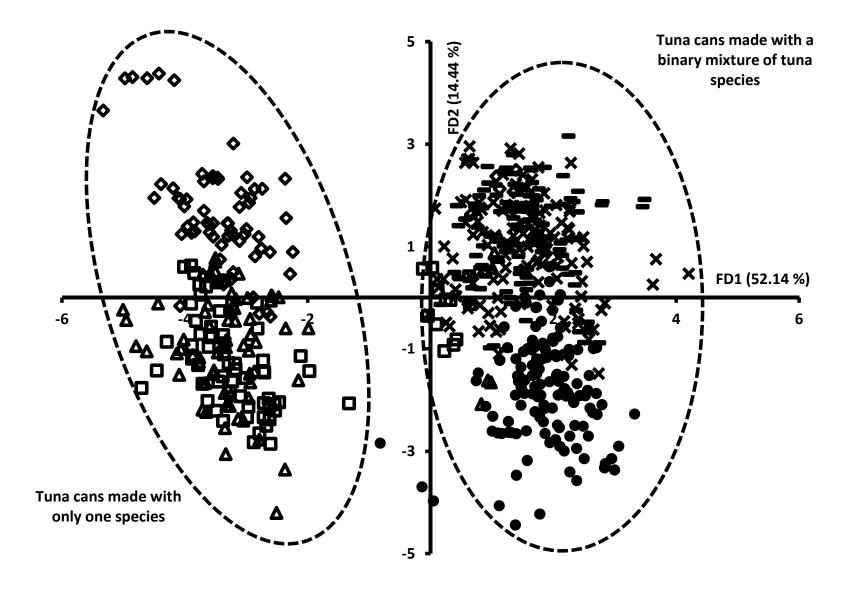


Figure 5



# **Table 1a:**

Composition of canned tuna	code	number of cans
100% of yellowfin tuna	Y100	24
100% of Skipjack tuna	S100	48
100% of Bigeye tuna	B100	32
99% of yellowfin tuna and 01% of bigeye tuna	Y99/B01	8
95% of yellowfin tuna and 05% of bigeye tuna	Y95/B05	8
90% of yellowfin tuna and 10% of bigeye tuna	Y90/B10	8
75% of yellowfin tuna and 25% of bigeye tuna	Y75/B25	8
50% of yellowfin tuna and 50% of bigeye tuna	Y50/B50	8
99% of yellowfin tuna and 01% of skipjack tuna	Y99/S01	8
95% of yellowfin tuna and 05% of skipjack tuna	Y95/S05	8
90% of yellowfin tuna and 10% of skipjack tuna	Y90/S10	5
75% of yellowfin tuna and 25% of skipjack tuna	Y75/S25	8
50% of yellowfin tuna and 50% of skipjack tuna	Y50/S50	10
10% of yellowfin tuna and 90% of skipjack tuna	Y10/S90	5
90% of skipjack tuna and 10% of bigeye tuna	S90/B10	5
50% of skipjack tuna and 50% of bigeye tuna	S50/B50	10
25% of skipjack tuna and 75% of bigeye tuna	S25/B75	8
10% of skipjack tuna and 90% of bigeye tuna	S10/B90	5
05% of skipjack tuna and 95% of bigeye tuna	S05/B95	8
01% of skipjack tuna and 99% of bigeye tuna	S01/B99	8
Total		232

# Table 1b

Commercial tuna cans	Prediction	% of Correct classification
Yellowfin (n=10)	15 spectra belonging to bigeye 7 spectra belonging to Y75/S25 4 spectra belonging to skipjack 3 spectra belonging to yellowfin 1 spectra belonging to Y75/B25	10
Bigeye ( <i>n</i> =10)	21 spectra belonging to bigeye 9 spectra belonging to skipjack	70
Skipjack (n =10)	30 spectra belonging to skipjack	100
Total	90	60