IOTC-2017-CoC14-04b [E]

A Summary of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme During 2016

IOTC

Annual Contractors' Report

31/03/2017

Submitted by:

MRAG

CapFish

Project code:	ZG2013
Version:	1.0
Prepared by:	JMC
Approved by:	JMC/SY

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acronyms

ATF	Authorisation to Fish
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CMF	Catch Monitoring Form
CV	Carrier Vessel
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IRCS	International Radio Call Sign
LSTLV	Large Scale Tuna Longlining Vessel
ROP	Regional Observer Programme
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

1 Introduction

During the calendar year 2016, the Regional Observer Programme (ROP) monitored a total of 1215 transhipments from Large Scale Tuna Longlining Vessels (LSTLVs) within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's (IOTC) Area of Competence; 67% were from Taiwan, Province of China, with Chinese, Seychellois, Japanese, Malaysian and Korean flagged vessels accounting for 11%, 11%, 6%, 4% and 1% respectively (Figure 1). The category 'Others' is made up of vessels from Tanzania and Oman, both of which contributed, individually, to approximately 1%. The number of transhipments made is significantly higher than the 726 monitored in 2015. The proportions made by flag are approximately the same, with a slight increase by the Seychelles from 5% to 11%.

Deployments occurred on Carrier Vessels (CVs) predominantly flagged to Vanuatu (29%), Taiwan, Province of China (24%), and Malaysia (10%), with transhipments also completed by CVs flagged to Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Panama, Liberia, Singapore, Kiribati and Japan.

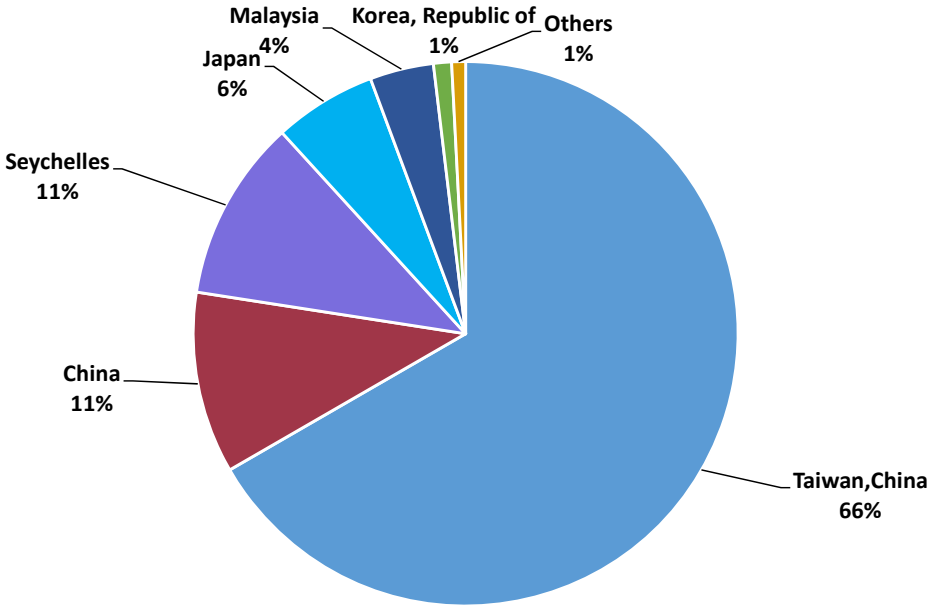

Figure 1 Percentage contribution by fleet to the total number of IOTC transhipments during 2016.

A summary of the ROP deployments (i.e. the number of CV trips with observers deployed on them) during 2016 is shown in Figure 2. There were a total of 70 deployments, although on one of these deployments no transhipments took place (there was also one additional deployment that was cancelled altogether), almost double the number from 2015. Twelve of these continued onto or came from the Atlantic Ocean and the regulatory area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The number of deployments was highest in June and July, with 14 and 13 deployments respectivelyFigure 2 Observer deployments for IOTC ROP in 2015 and 2016. Figure 2 also shows the annual cycle of deployments from 2015 for comparison.

There were a number of occasions when a carrier vessel would come into port during a deployment to conduct transhipments. As these transhipments were in port they did not need observer coverage from the ROP and in some cases the vessel would be in for almost a month. This will have financial consequences for the ROP. It might be that the cost of keeping an observer in the port during a deployment is greater than returning them to their home country and starting a new deployment when the vessel has finished transhipping in port and is ready to go out to the high seas again. Participants in the ROP should consider scheduling transhipments to minimise the amount of time an observer spends in port.

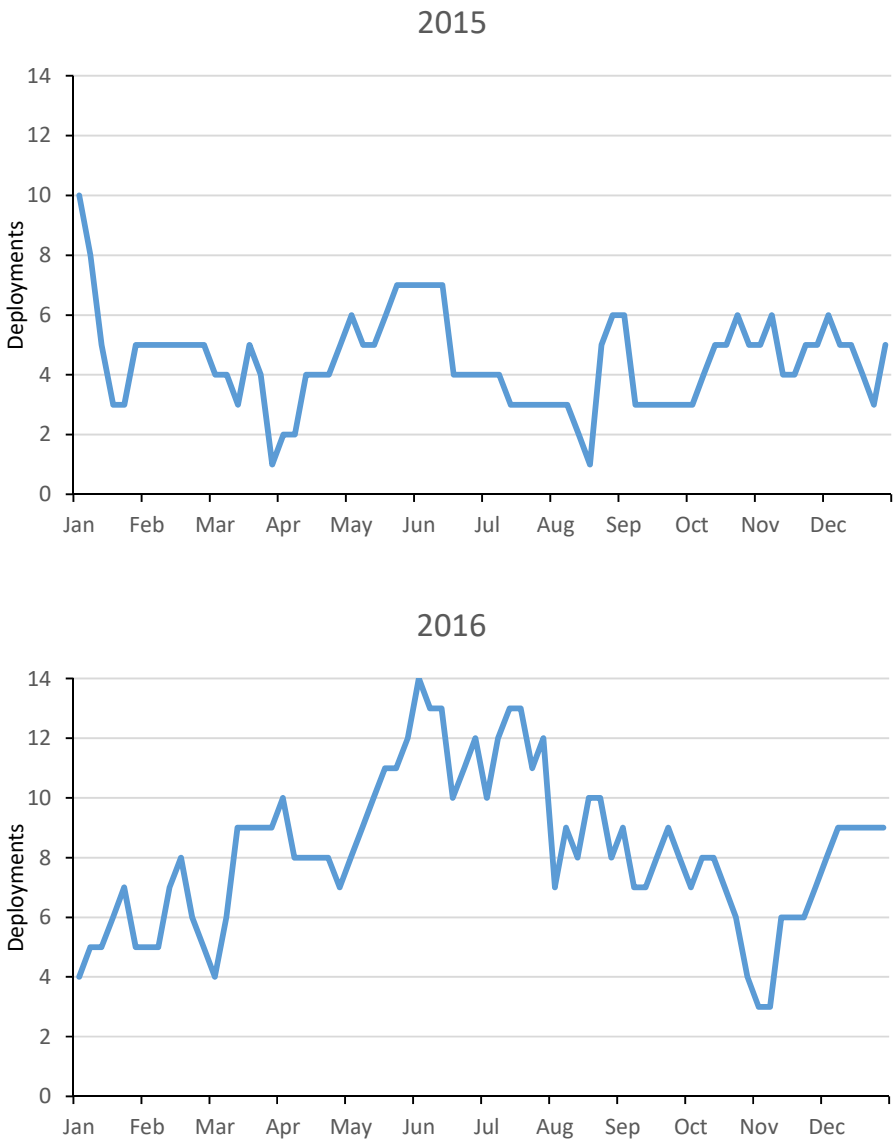

Figure 2 Observer deployments for IOTC ROP in 2015 and 2016.

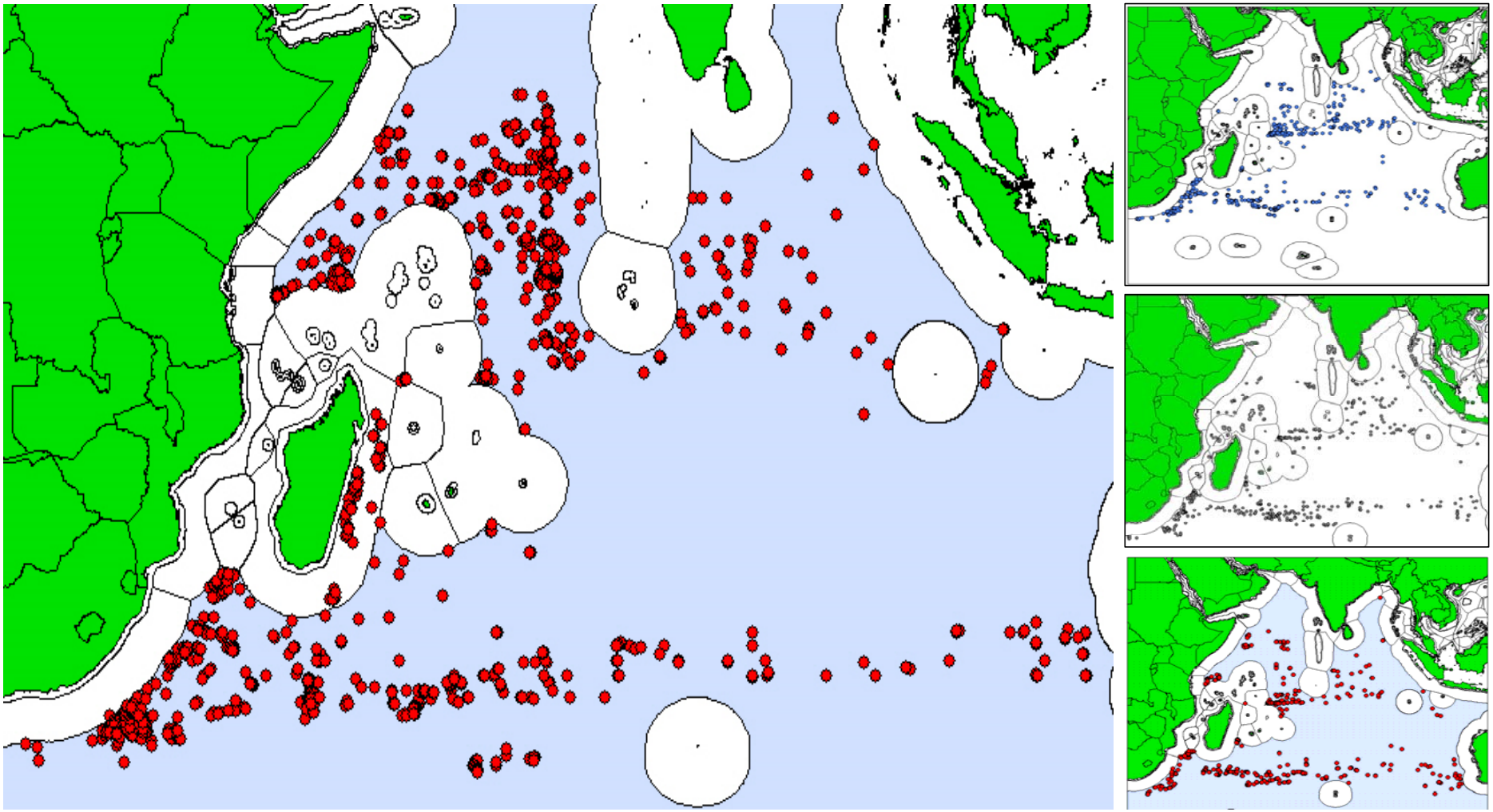

Figure 3 Transhipment locations during 2016 (main), 2013 (top right), 2014 (middle right) and 2015 (bottom right).

NB: The spatial distribution of transhipments is similar to previous years with distinctive ‘bands’ of transhipments at around 12° and 34° south, though with a greater number of transhipments occurring in the western Indian Ocean. A number of transhipments occurred within the Malagasy EEZ, these were authorised by the Malagasy Ministry of Fisheries.

2 Sampling

2.1 Weight estimations

Weight estimation procedures have been previously discussed in the Review of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme[1]. The differences between the overall observed weight and the vessel declared weight is shown in Figure 4 and for tuna species only in Figure 5.

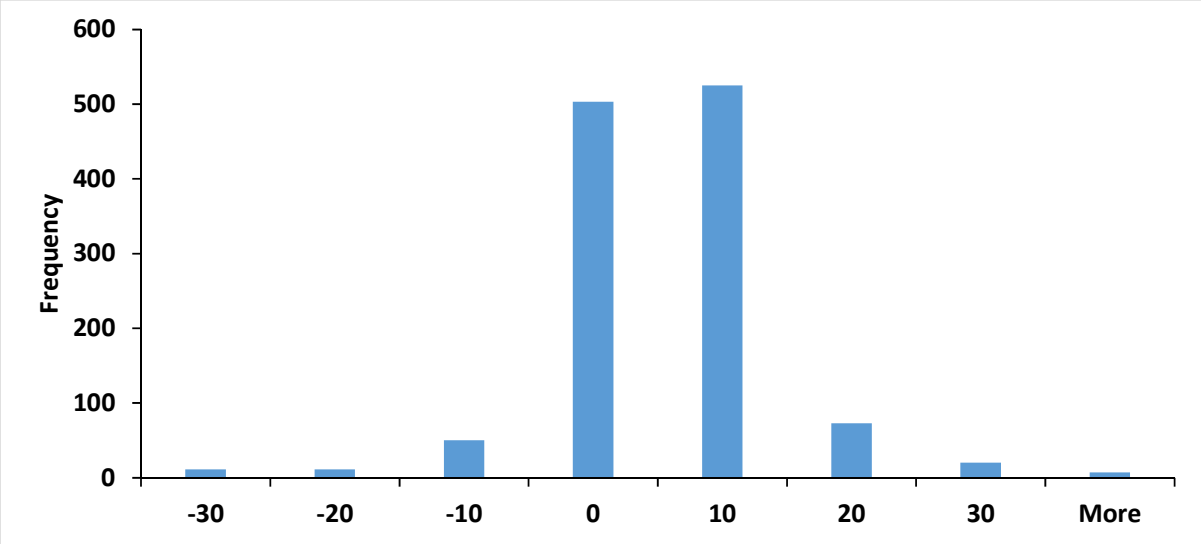

Figure 4 Difference in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (all species).

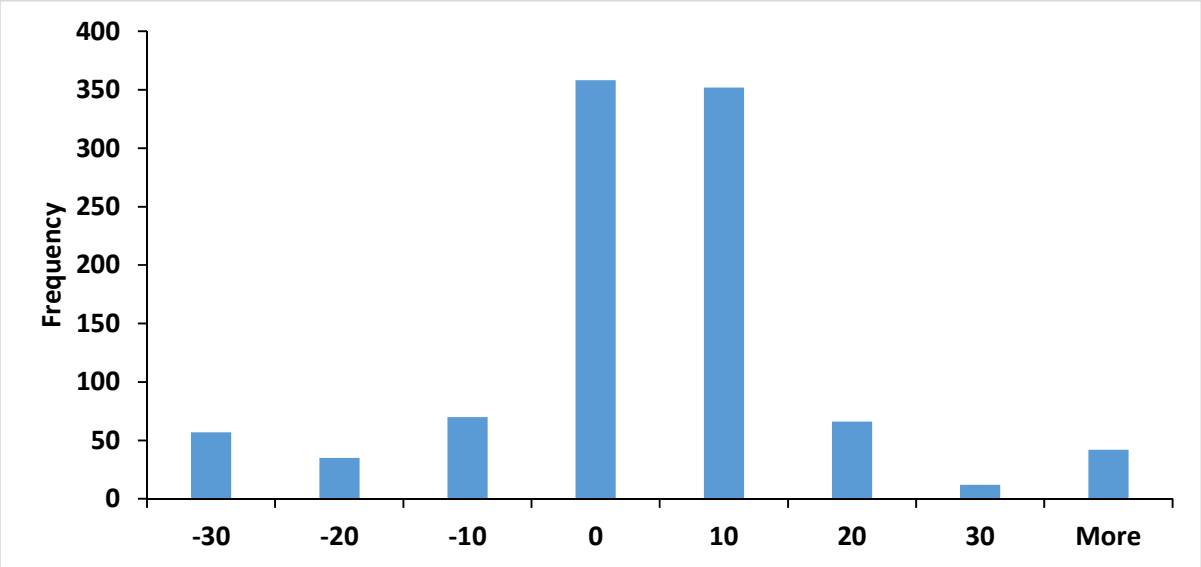

Figure 5 Differences in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (tuna species only).

Negative differences represent transhipments where the observer's estimate is higher than the vessel's declaration, positive differences are where the observer's estimate is lower.

[1] MRAG and CapFish (2010). Review of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme. CoC48_Add1[E]

For all fish, 90% of estimates were within 10% of the vessel's declaration, with the vessel declaring more than the observer's estimate approximately 52% of the time. A similar trend is seen if only tuna products are considered.

Discrepancies between observed and declared weights have been discussed in previous reports.

2.2 Species Identification

The main species transhipped during 2016 were bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*), with lesser quantities of other species including swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), opah (*Lampris guttatus*), southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*), various shark species (Selachimorpha (Pleurotremata)), Indo-Pacific blue (*Makaira mazara*), striped (*Tetrapturus audax*) and black marlin (*Makaira indica*).

3 Southern bluefin tuna

Since the adoption of the Resolution on the Implementation of a CCSBT (Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna) Catch Documentation Scheme on 1st January 2010, any southern bluefin tuna transferred must be accompanied by a catch monitoring form (CMF) which is countersigned by the observer to verify they have monitored the transhipment. During 2016, southern bluefin tuna were transhipped and declared on 53 occasions during 16 different deployments, with a total of 1037.8 tonnes being transferred (Table 1).

Table 1 Transhipments of Southern Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) declared during 2016.

Deployment No.	CV Name	CV IOTC #	Observer Name	Number of Transhipments	Total Declared Weight (t)
337	CHITOSE	15114	Rebeca Ocon	1	44.582
339	TUNA PRINCESS	8447	Rob Gater	1	12.37
342	VICTORIA II	8452	Basil Vilakazi	1	5.759
346	MEITA MARU	8461	Hendrik Crous	1	1.268
350	IBUKI	14787	Mzwandile Silekwa	4	14.863
367	CHITOSE	15114	Hendrik Crous	18	265.239
371	CHEN YU NO. 7	900080046	Martin Ward	1	0.725
374	MEITA MARU	8461	Rebeca Ocon	4	73.73
378	SHOTA MARU	8459	Jose Rebollo	1	57.152
379	CHIKUMA	14788	Barrie Rose	2	1.606
381	TAISEI MARU NO.15	8465	Pedro Costa	1	16.889
388	VICTORIA II	8452	Tony Dimitrov	3	49.014
392	CHIKUMA	14788	Basil Vilakazi	11	335.054
394	CHITOSE	15114	Nick French	1	45.411
403	KAIHO MARU	8468	Brandon Scott	1	0.254
405	GENTA MARU	13783	Bruce Biffard	2	113.884

4 Vessel checks

The roles and responsibilities of the observers with regards to at sea vessel checks are outlined in Annex 3 of Resolution 14/06 and the differences in the procedures for vessel checking were highlighted in the 2013 ROP report (IOTC-2013-CoC10-04b).

A total of 1215 transhipments were undertaken by 362 different LSTLVs during 2016. Checks were carried out on the LSTLVs 1204 times. In most cases the LSTLV was boarded for checks, however on 75 occasions the vessel was not boarded but instead logbooks and the Authorisation to Fish (ATF) were passed over to the observer on the CV. Most LSTLVs were checked once or twice, however several LSTLVs were checked multiple times including an LSTLV that was checked 12 times. The number of times individual LSTLVs were checked in 2016 is shown in Figure 6.

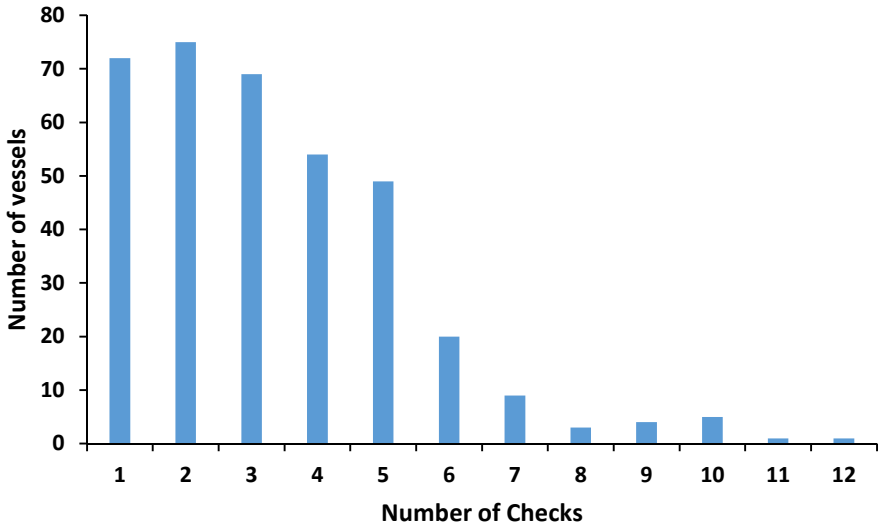

Figure 6 Number of times vessels checked in 2016.

A brief summary of the results of the LSTLV checks is given below. Full details of the possible infractions can be found in the IOTC Circular 2017-30 summarising possible infractions observed under the Regional Observer Programme during 2016.

a. Check the validity of the fishing vessel's authorisation or licence to fish tuna and tuna like species in the IOTC area. Flag States are required, under Resolution 15/04, to submit to the Secretariat, templates of their official Authorisation to Fish (ATF) outside national jurisdictions. The provision of templates assists observers in identifying valid ATFs when conducting vessel checks. The ROP currently has examples of ATFs from all participating Fleets. During 2016, two vessels that were boarded did not produce a valid ATF when requested by the observer.

On five occasions the ATF shown to the observer was for an area other than the Indian Ocean. In these cases either the ATF was for the Pacific Ocean, was a coastal State fishing licence or the issuing authority could not be identified. On five occasions the ATF shown was out of date at the time of the last recorded fishing event. In one case a licence had expired in 2009.

On seven occasions the ATF was not produced at the time but faxed through later to the observer on the CV after the transhipment.

b. Check and note the total quantity of catch on board, and the amount to be transferred to the carrier vessel. This is done through direct interview with the vessel captain or fishing master (using translation sheets where appropriate). Observers do not check the holds because of health and safety reasons and it is outside the remit of the programme.

c. Check the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) is functioning. On 12 occasions, between seven vessels that were boarded, no VMS unit was shown to the observer. In all but one case, the vessels were boarded on other occasions during 2016 and the VMS unit was shown to the observer. Of those shown, in 38 cases the power light did not appear to be on or no power light could be found or seen.

Observers have started recording the type of unit used on each vessel and identified 15 of the most commonly observed, a guide for these is shown in Appendix 1.

d. Examine the logbook. Logbooks were previously recorded as printed and bound, printed and unbound, unprinted and bound, unprinted and unbound, and electronic, a summary of those logbooks observed is shown in Table 2.

This was changed during 2016 and they are now categorised by whether they are paper or electronic, if they match the fleet official fishing logbook template, if they are bound and if they are consecutively numbered, the results from these observations are shown in Table 3.

Table 2 Summary of logbook checks made in the first part of 2016, using original categories.

Logbook format	Number
Printed and Bound	258
Printed and Unbound	43
Electronic	1

Table 3 Summary of logbook checks made during 2016 using updated categories.

Category	Logbook Type	Logbook Official	Logbook Bound	Logbook Numbered
Yes / Paper	890	871	846	821
No / Electronic	12	29	54	81
Unknown		2	2	

e. Verify whether any of the catch on board resulted from transfers from other vessels, and check on documentation on such transfers. One LSTLV reported receiving around 31 tonnes of fish from other vessels, there was no accompanying documentation and he requested that the observer did not report this.

f. In the case of an indication that there are possible infractions involving the fishing vessel, immediately report the possible infractions to the carrier vessel master. While the CV vessel master is normally notified of any possible infractions, it is through the observers' final report that the Secretariat is notified. The Secretariat will then report the possible infractions to the fleets. Due to request from the fleets, copies of the verification reports are also offered to the vessel captain so it can be returned to the fleet.

g. Report the results from these duties on the fishing vessel in the observers report. The results of the vessel checks undertaken by observers are summarised in their final report and any discrepancies are elaborated on. In addition a photographic record of all vessel authorisations, VMS units and logbooks as well as external vessel markings is maintained.

h. Identifying the LSTLV. In addition to the above, observers are also required to verify and record the name of the LSTLV concerned along with its IOTC number, International Radio Call Sign (IRCS) and national registration number and determine how consistent the markings are with the requirements of Resolution 15/04. The results of these vessel identification checks are shown in Table 4 and indicate the number of occasions where the observer either could not verify the information against that given in the IOTC Record of Authorised Vessels or considered that the markings on the vessel were either not correctly displayed, or were worn or otherwise obscured and so were not legible.

Table 4 Summary of checks on LSTLV identifiers

Identification check	Number of occasions
Vessel name	51
Vessel IRCS	18
Vessel national registration number	15

There is no IOTC requirement for vessels to have their national registration number marked on the superstructure. Table 4 refers to occasions where the number was marked but could not be verified or was incorrect. There were an additional 80 occasions where the number could not be verified as it was not displayed.

5 Other Possible Infractions

There were no other potential infractions observed.

6 Observer Training

There are currently 80 observers who have received IOTC training since 2009, some of whom were trained directly through the IOTC whilst others crossed over from ICCAT with prior approval from IOTC Secretariat. All observers are also trained to monitor CCSBT transhipments. Not all observers who have been trained are currently active and many have left the programme. It is therefore necessary to continue to hold observer courses on a regular basis to replace those who drop out, and to ensure the increasing demand is met. All courses are now run in conjunction with ICCAT, with observers being eligible to work in ICCAT and IOTC as well as monitoring CCSBT transhipments.

7 Other Issues

7.1 Health and Safety

During 2016 there was one deployment refusal by an observer on the grounds of safety, as there were not enough lifejackets on board. However this was resolved and the vessel sailed at a later date. One observer reported that the CV tied down the life rafts after leaving port, making the hydrostatic releases inoperable and restricting their use in an emergency. Life rings were also tied down. Another observer reported that all immersion suits were stowed and padlocked into a compartment once the vessel had sailed making them difficult or impossible to access in an emergency. There was also a general comment about a complete lack of any hard hats or safety gear besides work boots being worn by the crew. One incident of an injury to an observer was reported, in which an observer slipped on deck following leakage of oil from a burst pipe, which resulted in two broken bones in his foot. Injuries to crew members on LSTLVs were also reported, including a skull fracture and broken leg caused by a roller breaking off when transhipping in poor weather.

The issue of piracy has been raised by observers again, with a couple of possible attacks being averted by armed guards on the LSTLVs during transhipments. It has been noted that some CVs are now operating in high risk areas (see Figure 3) without any anti-piracy measures in place. This includes basic precautions such as allowing the CV to drift at night with no Officer (or any crew) on watch (although this was corrected for this in a subsequent deployment following correspondence with the Consortium).

While the conditions on most of the vessels are to a good standard there are a number of vessels where hygiene standards are low. These, along with any safety issues, are now regularly reported in the observer's final reports.

7.2 Waste disposal

Waste disposal methods vary among CVs and most have operational waste disposal plans in place. However the transhipment process continues to result in waste being discharged at sea by LSTLVs. The most commonly noted items disposed of are packaging boxes.

7.3 Vessel cooperation

Cooperation from both LSTLVs and CVs has again generally been good.

Appendix 1 - VMS guide for use by ROP Observers

1. Argos MARGE

2. Argos MARGE V2

2. Argos MARGE V2 (without junction box

Only power supply (on left)


3. Argos (Seimac) FVT

4. Argos (CLS) LEO

5. Furuno Felcom 16 / 19

6. Japan Radio Company (JRC) JUE-95VM

7. CLS Thorium TST-100

8. Thrane & Thrane (Sailor) Capsat TT-3022D


9. Thrane & Thrane (Sailor) Capsat TT-3026S Mini C

10. Thrane & Thrane (Sailor) Capsat

6194 terminal control unit TT3027D Antennae


11. Trimble Galaxy

12. Pole Star MAT – IDP690

.

13. Glocom GX-9

14. CLS triton (iridium)

15. CLS VELA

Note all antennae are displayed on the right and the units installed indoors are displayed on the left.