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# Role of Observers / Observer appointment, powers, ethics

## *IOTC ROS SFO TR2*

Category: Role of Observers / Observer appointment, powers, ethics

*[IOTC ROS SFO TR2]*



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This module aims to raise Observers awareness of their role and of the importance of their work as fisheries observer for the monitoring and management of tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean.

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the role and duties of scientific observers
2. Aware of procedures that rule observer selection, appointment and registration
3. Familiar with protocols for observer conduct on-board vessels and the importance of cultural awareness
4. Fully aware of IOTC ROS code of conduct



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## Scientific Observer Role

1. Independent specialist, deployed on-board commercial fishing vessels in accordance with a mandated observer programme.
2. Used to record unbiased data and report on technical, regulatory, scientific and economic aspects relating to the operational side of the fishing industry.
3. Not employed in an enforcement role. Their main purpose is to collect accurate data to support effective management.

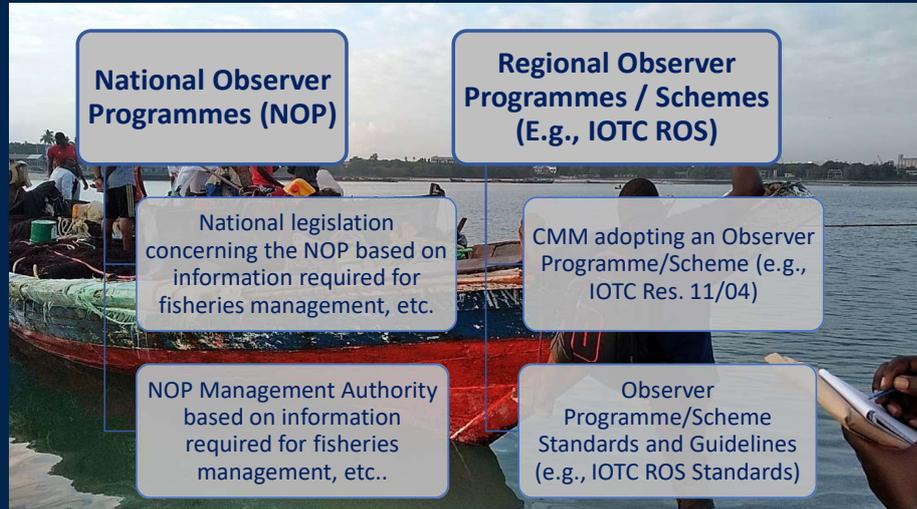


Scientific observers working on fishing vessels during normal operations are usually the only independent source of this information. Scientific observers are not employed in an enforcement role, as their main purpose is to collect accurate data to support effective management of the marine resources, which is to the long-term advantage of the fishing industry. However, as this takes place alongside the standard data collection protocols, the presence of the observer on-board inherently allows recording the level of compliance within the fishery.



## Scientific Observer Role & Duties

Can be defined both at national and regional level:



Scientific Observers role and duties can be defined both at national and regional level. At national level their role and duties can be defined under country national legislation or by the organisation in charge of their deployment. At regional level their role and duties are defined by regional organisations in the context of regional observer programmes or observer schemes such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission Regional Observer Scheme.



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## SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER DUTIES

1. Ensure their own safety at sea
2. Identify correctly both target and non targeted catches
3. Collect information and data needed to complete the observation forms
4. Correctly record data on forms provided
5. Enter observation data into database
6. Writing reports



✓ Deployment report

✓ Preliminary trip report

✓ Weekly report

✓ Final trip report



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The duties of scientific observers are mainly related to the collection of scientific data required for fisheries management.



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## IOTC ROS Observer Role & Duties

**The duties of the scientific observer in the context of the IOTC ROS are detailed under the IOTC Resolution 10/04, para. 10 & 11.**



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## IOTC ROS Prerequisites for Observers

1. Minimum age of 18 years
2. Valid medical fitness certificate
3. Clear police record or certificate of good conduct
4. Evidence of proficiency in literacy and numeric competency
5. Valid passport
6. Valid STCW Basic Safety Training Certificate (or equivalent)
7. Certificate of successful completion of a Basic Observer Course
8. Acceptance of the IOTC ROS code of conduct.



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To achieve the broad range of tasks assigned to them, Scientific Observers will need to acquire / maintain a standard level of basic competency. To succeed they will need the academic qualifications and training to optimally accomplish their tasks and responsibilities. Therefore the IOTC has approved standards and procedures for the selection, training and registration of scientific observers to ensure that these are standardized throughout the IOTC ROS, independently of the organisation(s) in charge of training and manage the observers. These include minimum pre-requisites for the registration of scientific observers to conduct observation work on the context of the IOTC Regional Observer Scheme as well as Scientific Observer minimum competency standards (<https://iotc.org/documents/regional-observer-scheme-programme-standards>).



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## IOTC ROS Observer Registration

1. Observer Provider submits a request for observer registration to the IOTC Secretariat;
2. Only observers that meet IOTC ROS Prerequisites will be accepted for registration;
3. IOTC Secretariat allocates Observers with an individual IOTC registration code;
4. Individual IOTC registration code must be included on observer data submitted to the Secretariat.
5. Observer registration is limited to a time period determined by the validity of the observer's documentation.



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The IOTC observer registration is the procedure to be used by national observer programmes to demonstrate that their observers meet IOTC agreed requirements. This standard requires that IOTC Contracting and Cooperating Parties (CPCs) may not deploy unregistered persons in a ROS Observer capacity and that all registered observers will meet the ROS expectations on IOTC observer registration.



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## Code of Conduct

1. Observers may not participate in any activity which would cause a reasonable person to question the impartiality or objectivity with which the Observer Programme is administered.
  - may not have direct financial interest in the observed fishery, other than the provision of observer services.
  - may not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gratuity, gift, favour, entertainment, loan or anything of monetary value from the fishery monitored.
  - may not solicit or accept employment as a crew member or an employee of the vessel or shore-side processor in any fishery while employed as an observer.
  - may not serve as observers on any vessel or at any shore-side facility owned or operated by a person who previously employed the observer in any capacity.



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Observers are required to conform to a Code of Conduct approved by the IOTC Commission. You should understand and conform to the Code.



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## Code of conduct (continued)

2. Observers may not participate in any activity which could impair the observer's ability to perform his/her duties.
  - engaging in drinking of alcoholic beverages while on duty;
  - engaging in the use or distribution of illegal substances; and
  - becoming physically or emotionally involved with vessel personnel.
3. Observers may not participate in any activity which could adversely affect the efficient accomplishment of their mission.
  - refrain from engaging in any illegal actions
  - avoid any behaviour that could adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity of observers
  - preserve the confidentiality of the collected data and observations made on board the fishing vessels



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## Code of conduct (continued)

### 4. Observer protocol while onboard a vessel include:

- respect the hierarchy and general rules of behaviour which apply to all vessel personnel, provided such rules do not interfere with observer duties.
- in all aspects involving vessel operations and safety at sea the observer will fall under the authority of the captain.
- have no authority to advise or direct any of the vessel operational activities or have any authority over any of the vessel personnel.
- have access to all operational areas of the vessel necessary to complete their work including the bridge, navigation and communication equipment.
- attempt to secure co-operation with officers to ensure that the observer work does not interfere with normal fishing and operational activities.



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## Status

- To be afforded officer status and expected to conduct themselves as such.
- To be allowed on the bridge and on the work-bridges so they can conduct the missions they've been allocated.
- To have access to the on-board navigation and communication equipment and to be provided assistance to routinely contact the Observer Provider.
- To attempt to secure co-operation with the officers to ensure that their work does not interfere with the normal fishing and operational activities.
- At no stage to confront the vessel master or any of the crew on any compliance issues or advise them or provide consent to any operation that may have compliance implications.



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## Cleanliness and Tidiness



- The observer's shall keep himself, its accommodation and work-place clean and neat at all times.
  - never wear boots, oil-skins or dirty overalls on the bridge or in the accommodation;
  - change into clean or appropriate clothing for meals;
  - always be on time for meals;
  - do not leave clothing or any of your personal items lying around;
  - keep your work space clean (pack away your computer and papers);
  - wash and stow sampling bins or gear securely;
  - never leave any equipment unsecured.



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Observers are professionals that collect very important information and they should behave in a way to ensure the best possible outcome for the data collection effort. The attitude and conduct of the observer will have a major influence on both its reception on board the fishing vessel, and the results and value of its work. The master of the fishing vessel and crew will quickly assess you by your actions and conduct. If they see they are dealing with a professional they will both respect you and be more willing to voluntarily provide assistance.



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## Ethics

- Observers must be aware and sensitive to the cultural practices of other members onboard. Including:
  - Manners of approach and address to officers and crew
  - If sitting at the officers table ask permission before sitting down, [every time] and excuse yourself when leaving
  - Awareness of eating customs
  - Awareness and respect of religious practices
  - Awareness of ablution and sanitary customs

A breach in this protocol can seriously offend the other parties.



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Observer must always conduct itself in a courteous, polite and professional manner with all members of the crew and must be aware of and sensitive to the cultural practices of crew members.



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## Confidentiality

1. An observer collects private fishing information and any information sharing is prohibited.
2. Fishing positions are normally a secretive personal strategies and sharing of those can impact the observer program credibility.
3. Sharing data can have an influence in the data accuracy.
4. Any requests of information that can be deemed confidential must be directed to the line supervisor



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Imagine taking a photo for your WhatsApp or Social Media Status update of yourself onboard; including vessel equipment, documentation or possibly a fisheries logbook in the picture or crew members at work - Are you potentially sharing private or sensitive information unintentionally? A good practice is to share all your pictures and notes with the Captain unless there are sensitive issues that you first need to discuss with your coordinator. Remember that you must be able to behave correctly in all situations, in particular concerning questions of hierarchy, work and confidentiality.



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# ANY QUESTIONS?



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