IOTC

A Summary of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme During 2013

Submitted by

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1 Introduction

During the calendar year 2013 the Regional Observer Program (ROP) monitored a total of 852 transhipments from Large Scale Tuna Longlining Vessels (LSTLVs); 68% were from Taiwan, Province of China, with Japanese, Chinese and Seychellois flagged vessels accounting for 8%, 8% and 7% respectively (Figure 1). The category 'Others' is made up of vessels from Indonesia, Oman, Thailand and Tanzania, all of which contribute, individually, to less than 1%. While the number of transhipments made is similar to 2012, the proportion made by Taiwan, China is down from 79% with significant increases by China (2% to 8%) and Malaysia (<1% to 4%).

The Carrier Vessels (CVs) were predominantly flagged to Vanuatu (46%), Taiwan, Province of China (17%), and Panama (15%) with transhipments also completed by CVs flagged to Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea and Singapore.

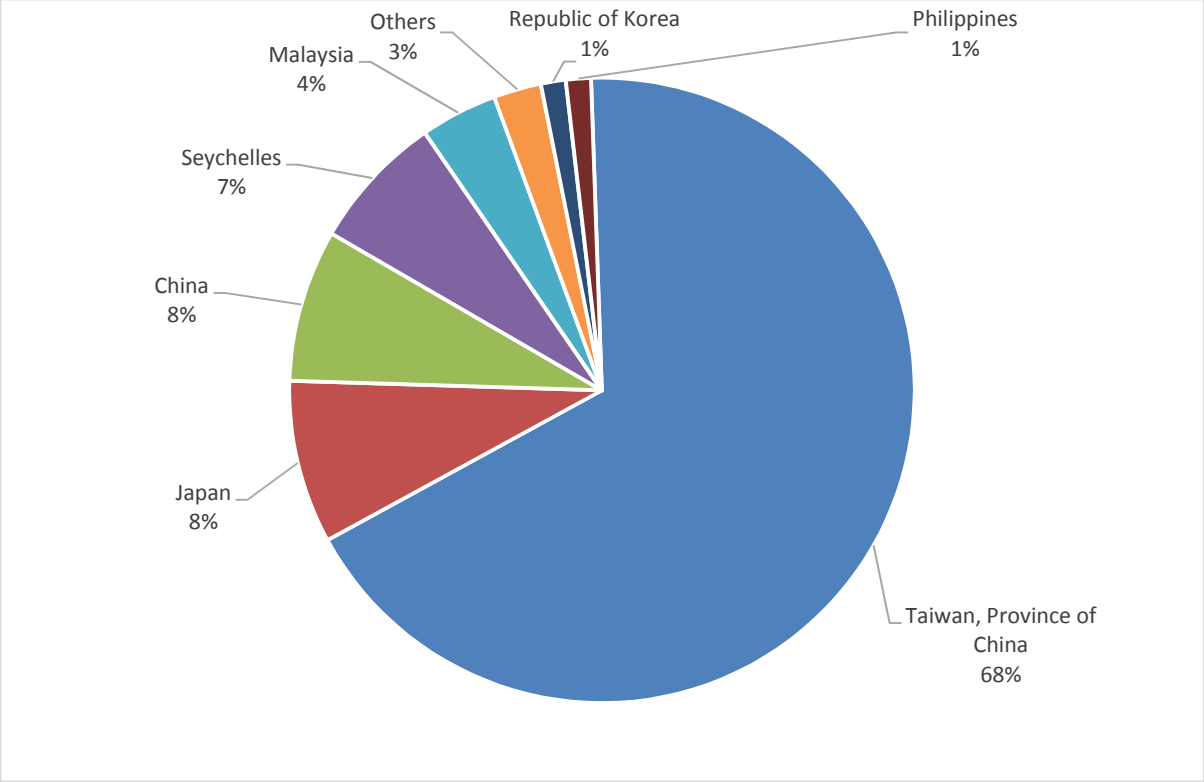

Figure 1 Percentage contribution by fleet to the total number of IOTC transhipments during 2013

A summary of the ROP deployments (number of CVs with observers deployed on them) during 2013 is shown in Figure 2, there were a total of 47, nine of which continued onto or came from ICCAT waters. The number of deployments by reporting period fluctuated between three and seven through January to June, before increasing to 12 at the start of July and dropping off to the minimum number of one towards the end of August.

In 2012 the peak in observer deployments was in December and the minimum level of deployments was observed during June to August. In 2013.

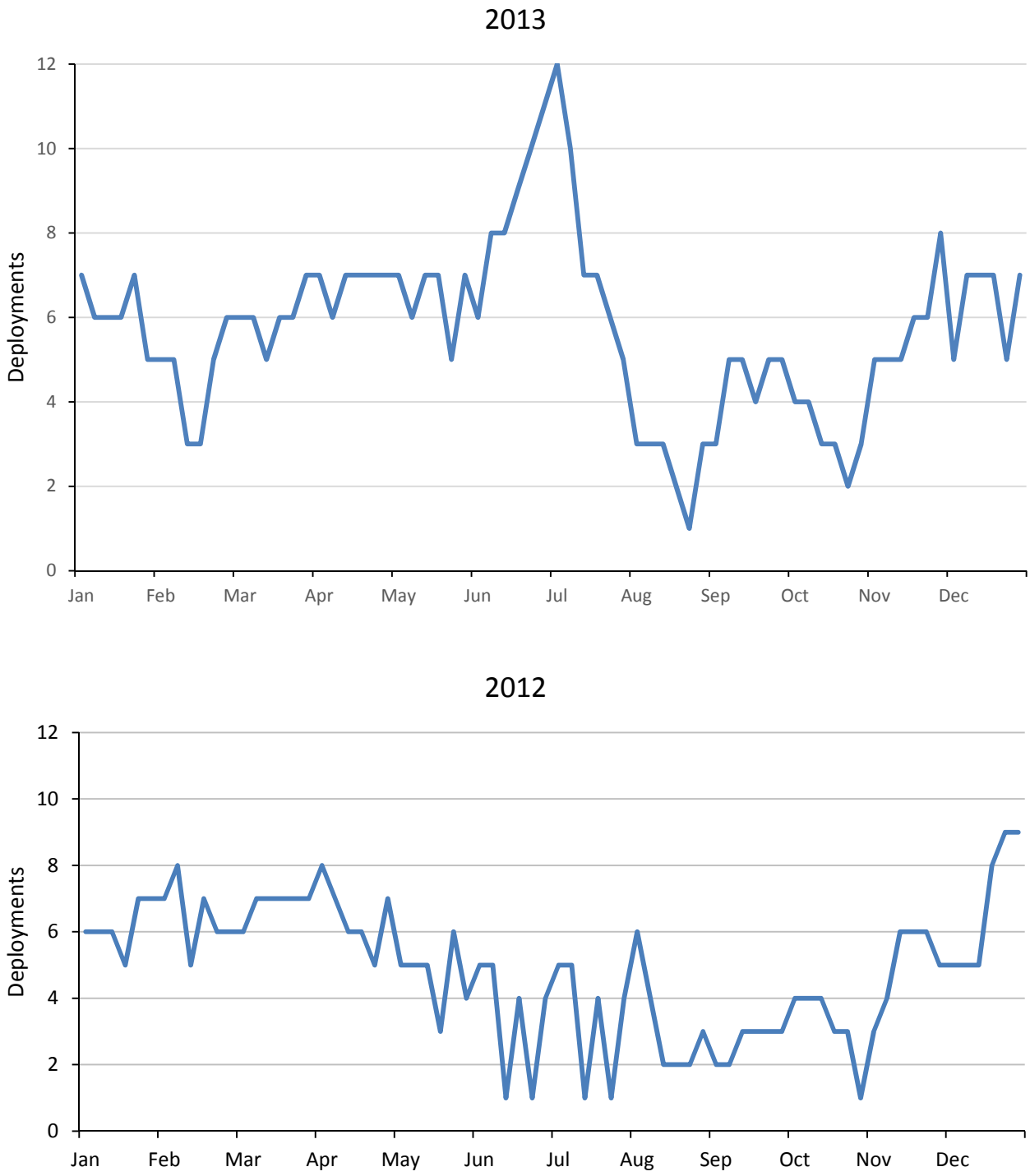

Figure 2. Observer deployments for IOTC ROP in 2013 and 2012.

Figure 3 shows the location of all transhipments during 2013 and, inset, 2012, 2011 and 2010. The spatial distribution of transhipments is similar to 2012 with distinctive 'bands' of transhipments at around 12° and 34° south. There are also transhipments to the north west of the IOTC area for the first time since 2010, a possible sign of the reduction of piracy pressure. There were no transhipments made within EEZs.

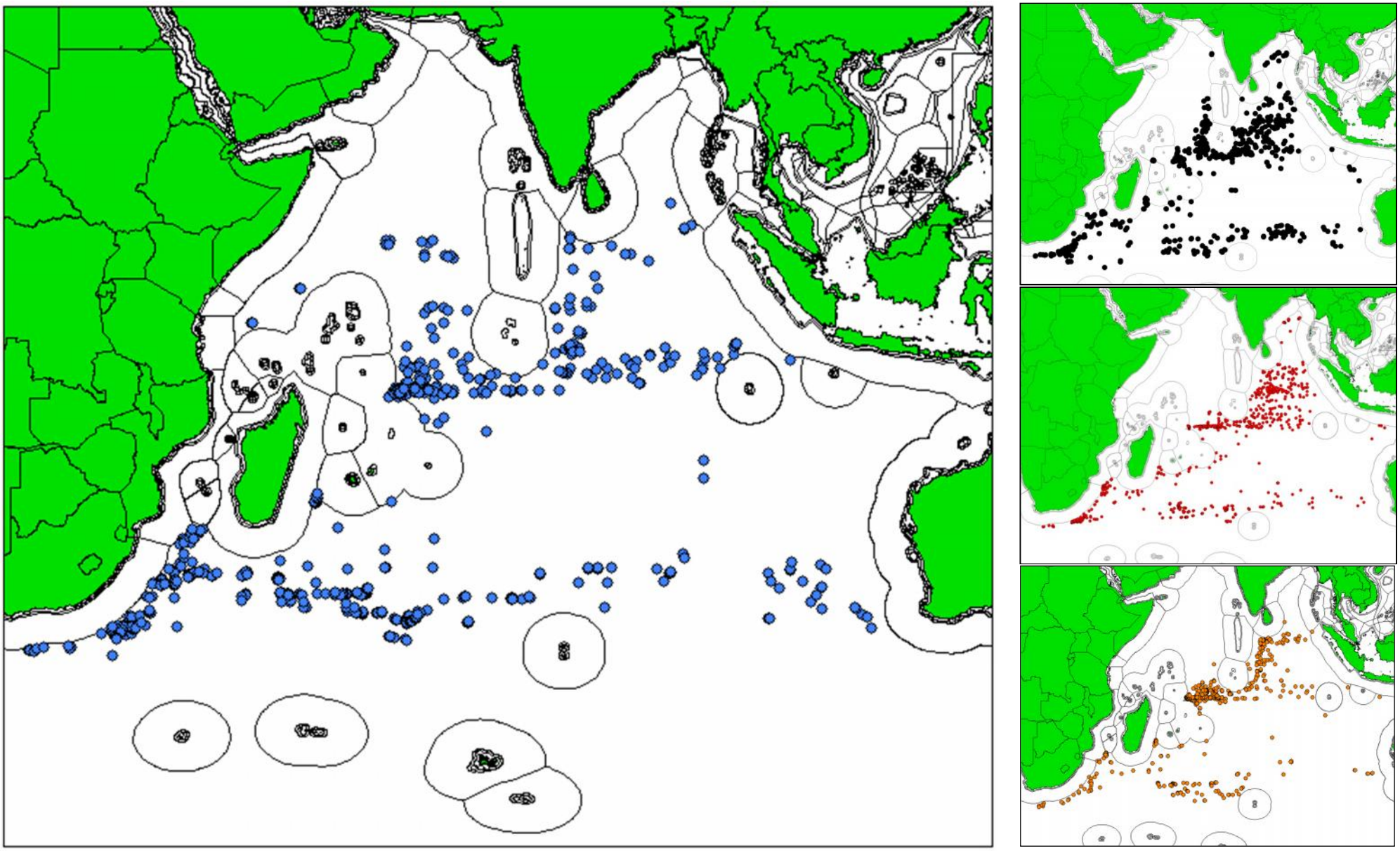

Figure 3 IOTC Transhipment locations during 2013 (main), 2010 (top right), 2011 (middle right) and 2012 (bottom right).

2 Sampling Protocols

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.

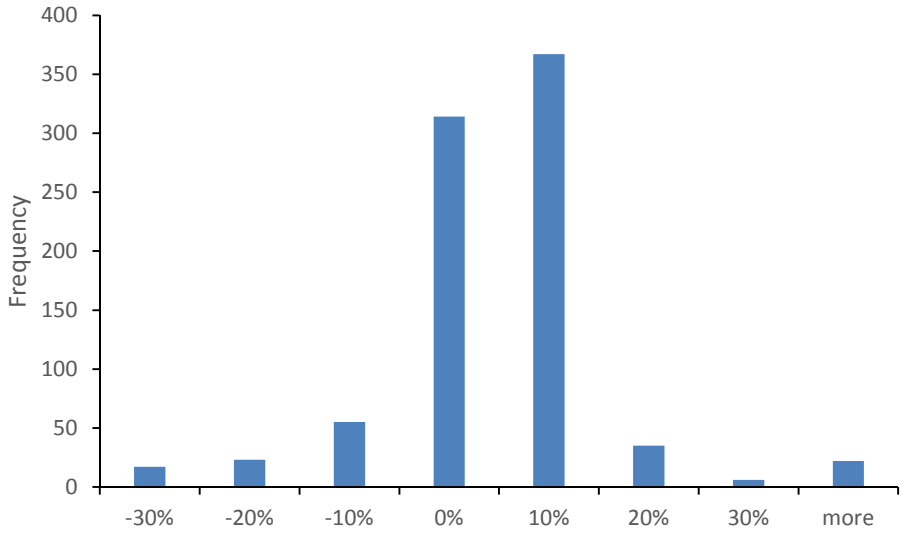

Figure 4 **Differences in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (all species).**

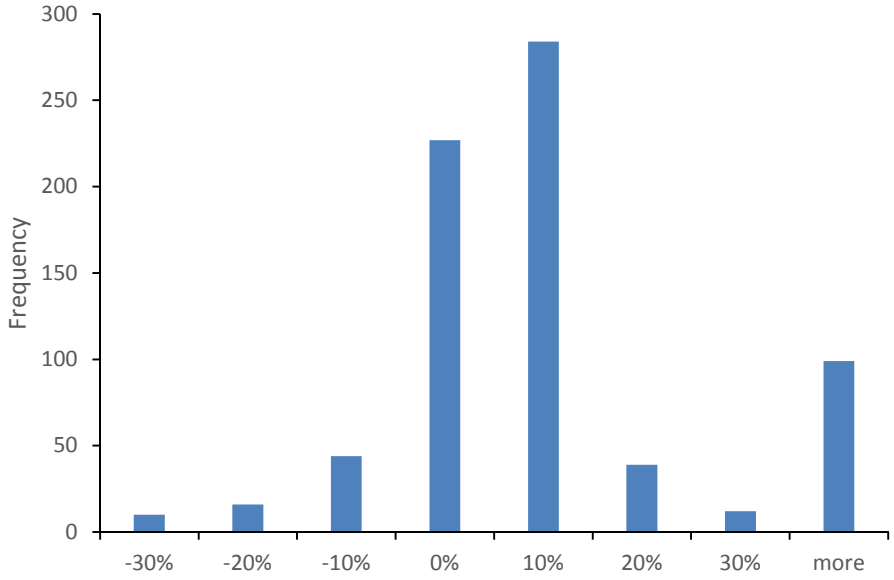

Figure 5 **Differences in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (tuna species only).**

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

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. For all fish, 85% of estimates were within 10% of the vessel's declaration. Of the balance, 87% were higher and 13% were lower than the vessels declaration which indicates in most cases the observer's estimate is higher than the vessel's declaration. Discrepancies between observed and declared weights can be attributed to a few specific points, these include:

- The majority of discrepancies occurred when LSTLVs transhipped fish in nets, particularly when oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*) are transferred, this makes it difficult to estimate both weight and numbers;
- Larger discrepancies also occurred with transfers of albacore, on one occasion the transhipment declaration was incorrect, recording 1,000kg instead of 10,000kg.
- The number of smaller YFT and BET are not always recorded in the vessel statistics;
- LSTLVs sometimes use a combination of processing methods on multiple species;
- Few individual billfish <5t in a transhipment are not fully recorded by the vessel;
- Sometimes the LSTLV will change their plans to tranship a species during the transhipment. If this occurs during transhipment and the declaration form has already been completed, portions of the transhipment may be either declared and not transhipped or included but not declared.

2.2 Species Identification

The main species transhipped during 2013 were bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*) with small amounts of other species, including swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*), various shark species (*Selachimorpha* (*Pleurotremata*)) and marlin (*Makaira* spp) and . Blue shark remain the most common shark species transhipped.

3 Southern bluefin tuna

Since the adoption of the Resolution on the Implementation of a CCSBT Catch Documentation Scheme on 1st January 2010, any southern bluefin tuna transferred must be accompanied by a catch monitoring form which is countersigned by the observer to verify they have monitored the transhipment. During 2013, southern bluefin tuna were transhipped and declared on 58 occasions during 19 different deployments with a total of 961.181 tonnes being transferred (Table 1).

Table 1 **Transhipments of Southern Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) during 2013**

Request No.	CV Name	CV IOTC #	Observer Name	Number of Transhipments	Total Declared Weight (t)
209	Ryoma	8442	Basil Vilakazi	1	23.765
212	Shin Izu	8457	Bruce Biffard	1	7.807
215	Tuna Queen	8446	Gary Breedt	2	0.904
223	Kurikoma	8462	Jonathan Newton	1	0.457
224	Ibuki	14787	Julio Ocon	13	126.205
225	Meita Maru	8461	M Silekwa	1	2.161
227	Futagami	8453	Anthony Donnelly	1	26.3
230	Taisei Maru No.15	8465	Samantha Cliffton	1	25.468
231	Chikuma	14788	Peter Lafite	2	10.429
233	Chitose	15114	Eddie Higgins	14	337.678
235	Futagami	8453	Henry John Heyns	1	19.65
236	Shota Maru	8459	Basil Vilakazi	11	236.884
238	Ibuki	14787	Anthony Donnelly	1	0.9
239	Chikuma	14788	Jonathan Newton	1	2.7
240	Taisei Maru No.24	8466	Taylan Koken	1	32.224
244	Genta Maru	13783	Mzwandile Silekwa	1	21.296
246	Shota Maru	8459	Jeffrey Heineken	3	7.797
249	Futagami	8453	Bruce Biffard	1	4.661
251	Shin Fuji	8458	John McDonagh	1	73.895

4 Vessel checks

The roles and responsibilities of the observers with regards to at sea vessel checks are outlined in Annex 3 of Resolution 12/05 and the differences in the procedures for vessel checking were highlighted in last year's ROP report (IOTC-2013-CoC10-04b). Of the 852 vessels that transhipped in 2013, observers managed to board 626 of them, on those vessels that weren't boarded the majority (183) passed over their logbooks and ATF for inspection. Most vessels were only checked once, however three vessels were checked seven times during 2013, the number of times individual vessels were checked in 2013 is shown in Figure 6.

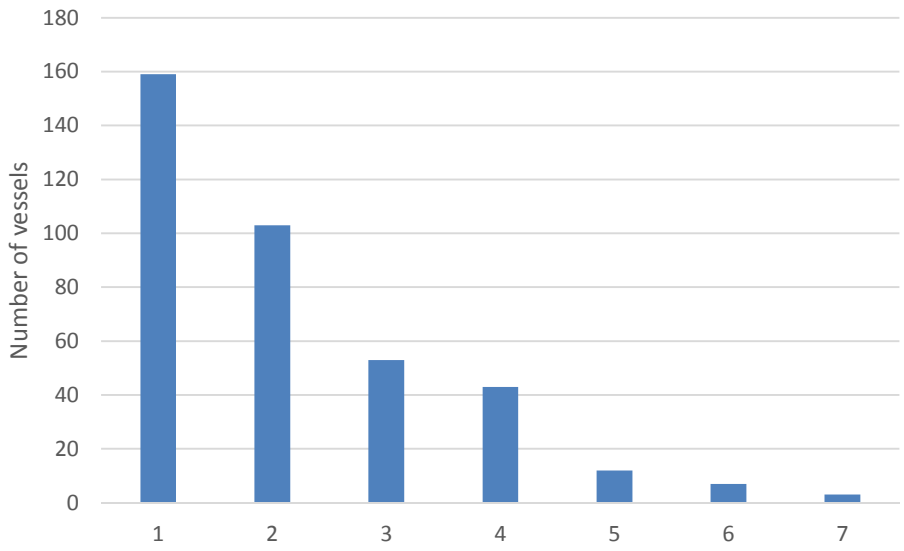

Figure 6 **Number of times vessels checked in 2013**

A brief summary of the results of the vessel checks is given below, full details of the possible infractions can be found in IOTC Circular 2014-19 (Summary table on possible infractions observed under the ROP [E]).

1. **Check the validity of the fishing vessel's authorisation or licence to fish tuna and tuna like species in the IOTC area**. To assist observers in identifying valid Authorisations to Fish (ATFs), the ROP currently has examples of from China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Oman, Philippines, Seychelles, Taiwan province of China and Thailand. During 2013, 24 vessels either did not produce an ATF when requested by the observer, produced an ATF that was not recognised by the observer or faxed through their ATF later to the observer on the CV. On 43 occasions the observer either did not think the ATF was valid for the Indian Ocean, the area of operation had been altered or they were not able to tell as it was not in a language they could read. On 12 occasions the ATF shown was out of date (the date of the last fishing day recorded in the logbook was after the expiry date of the ATF), in some cases by almost 2 years.

2. **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.

3. **Check the VMS is functioning.** During LSTLV checks carried out in 2013, all vessels were able to show the observer a VMS unit although in 11 cases the power light did not appear to be on or no power supply could be found. A number of observers reported that the VMS unit on the vessel was different to the VMS type and serial number as stated on the licence.

4. Examine the logbook. Logbooks are recoded as printed and bound, printed and unbound, unprinted and bound, unprinted and unbound and electronic. Potential infractions regarding logbooks are the most common, all unbound logbooks (451 in 2013) must be reported. A summary of logbook types observed during the vessel checks is shown in Table 3.

Table 2 Summary of logbook checks made in 2013

Logbook format	Number
Printed & Unbound	447
Printed & Bound	309
Unprinted & Bound	44
Unprinted and Unbound	4
Electronic	10
Not shown	1

5. **Verify whether any of the catch on board resulted from transfers from other vessels, and check on documentation on such transfers**. No vessels reporting receiving transhipments from other vessels

6. **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 flag State.

7. **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 are kept.

In addition to the above, observers are also required to verify and record the name of the LSTLV concerned along with its IOTC number, IRCS and national registration number and determine how consistent the markings are with Resolution 13/02. The results are shown in Table 3 and indicate the number of occasions where the observer either could not verify the information or considered that the markings on the vessel were not correctly displayed.

Table 3

Identification check	Number of occasions
Vessel name	55
Vessel IRCS	35
Vessel national registration number	113

5 Other Potential Infractions

There were no other potential infractions observed.

6 Observer Training

Currently there are 60 observers who have received IOTC training since 2009 (Appendix 1), some who have been trained directly through the IOTC others who have crossed over from ICCAT with prior approval from IOTC. All observers are also trained to monitor CCSBT transhipments. Not all observers who have been trained are currently active or are still in the programme. It is therefore necessary to continue to hold observer courses on a regular basis to replace those who drop out. There were three observers trained directly for IOTC in 2013.

7 Other Issues

7.1 Safety

All observers complete a pre sea inspection of the CV prior to sailing. There has been an improvement in vessel safety conditions since the beginning of the programme. During 2013 there were no deployment refusals by observers on the grounds of safety. All CVs possessed valid safety certificates and had sufficient number of serviced and certified lifesaving appliances.

CV Captains provide guidance regarding the suitability of sea conditions for transfer to the LSTLV and have the final decision regarding whether the transfer should proceed or not. All vessel checks were carried out safely during 2013 with no accidents reported, if conditions were considered dangerous the observer would not board the vessel.

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 LSTLV. The most commonly noted items disposed of are packaging boxes.

7.3 Vessel cooperation

Cooperation from both LSTLVs and CVs has been good.

7.4 Carrier Vessel conditions

While conditions on the CVs are variable, there have been no reports of unsuitable conditions onboard during 2013.

Appendix 1- IOTC trained observers

Observer Name	IOTC Number	ICCAT trained
Ray Manning	001	Yes
Kevin Ruck	002	No
Jano van Heerden	003	Yes
Jonathon Roe	004	Yes
James Bennet	005	No
David Hughes	006	Yes
James Moir-Clark	007	No
Hendrik Crous	008	Yes
Tony Dimitrov	010	Yes
Jeffrey Heinecken	011	No
Jaco Visagie	012	No
Jonathon Newton	013	Yes
Sam Rush	014	Yes
Hentie Heynes	015	Yes
David James Virgo	016	No
Juan Vilata	017	No
Patrick Nugent	018	No
Andrew Deary	019	Yes
George Stoyle	020	No
Nicky Wiseman	021	No
Neil Davidson	022	No
Nicholas Van Leenhoff	023	No
Lindsay Jones	024	Yes
Schalk Visagie	025	Yes
Thomas Hamish Gerrard	026	Yes
Gary Breedt	027	Yes
Peter Lafite	028	Yes
Ebol Rojas	029	Yes
Erich Gericke	030	No
Barry Rose	031	Yes
Nicholas Wren	032	Yes
Ramon Benedet	033	Yes
Clinton Grobbelar	034	Yes
Victor Ngcongo	035	Yes
Stephen Westcott	036	Yes
Steven Young	037	No
Anthony Donnelly	038	Yes
Thomas Franklin	039	Yes
Robert Clark	040	Yes
Pedro Jesus	041	Yes
Oliver Wilson	042	No
Jan Wissema	043	No
Elcimo Pool	044	Yes
Bruce Biffard	045	Yes
Carla Soler Carreras	047	Yes
Samantha Cliffton	048	Yes
Jane Le Lec	049	Yes
Marius Kapp	050	No
Aaron Mair	051	Yes
Martin Ward	052	Yes

Observer Name	IOTC Number	ICCAT trained
Taylan Koken	101	Yes
Julio Ocon	102	Yes
Pedro Costa	103	Yes
Basil Vilakazi	104	Yes
Jeffrey Heineken	105	Yes
Mzwandile Silekwa	106	Yes
Dwight Rees Dreyer	108	Yes
Pedro de Jesus	118	Yes
Filipe Miguel Rodrigues	112	Yes
John McDonagh	113	Yes
Ricardo Silva	114	Yes