A Summary of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme During 2017

IOTC

Annual Contractors' Report

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Submitted by:

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CapFish

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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 Longline Fishing Vessel
ROP	Regional Observer Programme
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

1 Introduction

During the calendar year 2017, the Regional Observer Programme (ROP) monitored a total of 1259 transhipments from Large Scale Tuna Longline Fishing Vessels (LSTLVs) within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's (IOTC) Area of Competence; 68% were from the fleet of Taiwan, Province of China, with Seychellois, Chinese, Japanese, Malaysian and Korean LSTLVs accounting for 10%, 10%, 6%, 4% and 2% respectively (Figure 1). The Oman flagged LSTLVs, contributed 3 transhipments in 2017. There were 44 transhipments more in 2017 than 2016 (1215). The proportions made by fleet are approximately the same compared to 2016.

Deployments occurred on Carrier Vessels (CVs) predominantly flagged to Taiwan, Province of China (30%), Vanuatu (28%), Republic of Korea (15%), and Malaysia (12%), with transhipments also completed by CVs flagged to Seychelles, Panama, Liberia, Singapore and Japan.

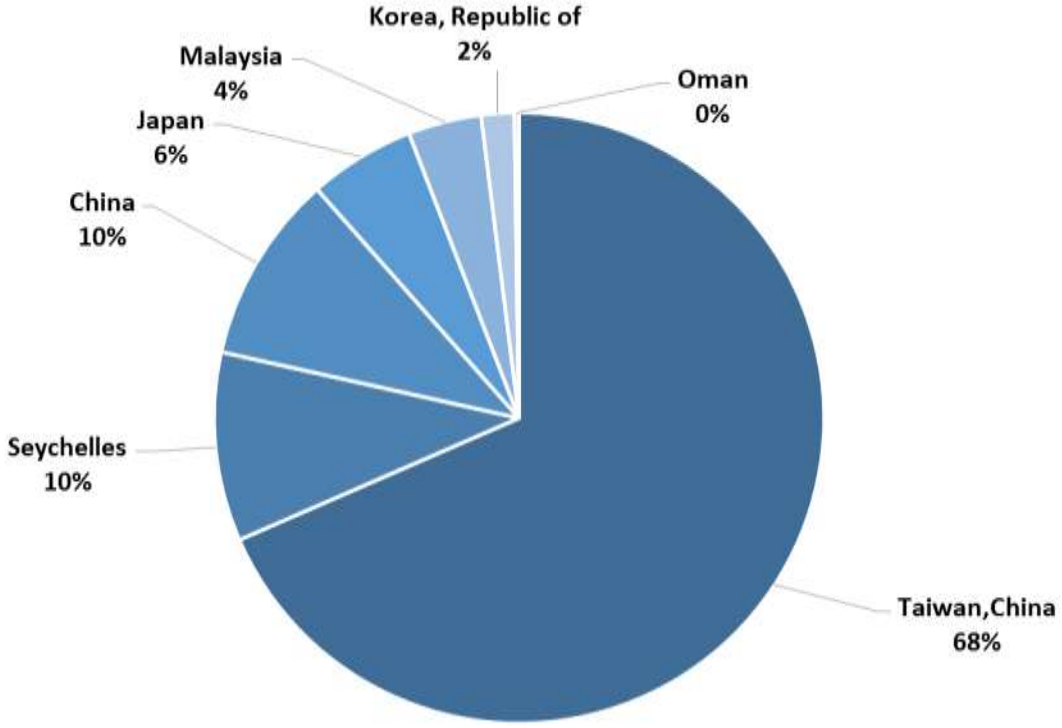

Figure 1 Percentage contribution by fleet to the total number of IOTC transhipments during 2017.

A summary of the ROP deployments (i.e. the number of CV trips with observers deployed on them) during 2017 is shown in Figure 2. There were a total of 60 deployments, (one additional deployment that was cancelled altogether), down 10 from 2016. Nine of these continued onto or came from the Atlantic Ocean; 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 respectively (Figure 2 Observer deployments for IOTC ROP in 2016 and 2017. Figure 2 also shows the annual cycle of deployments from 2016 for comparison.

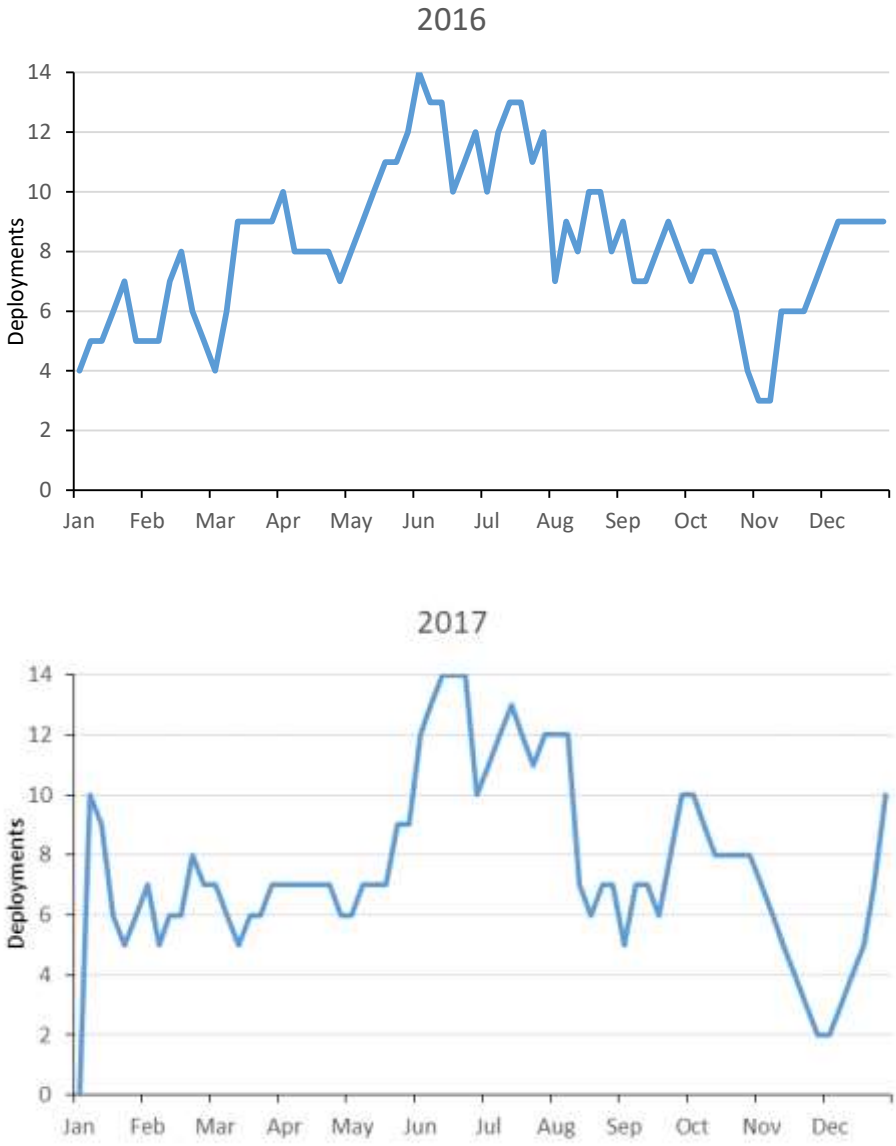

Figure 2 Observer deployments for IOTC ROP in 2016 and 2017.

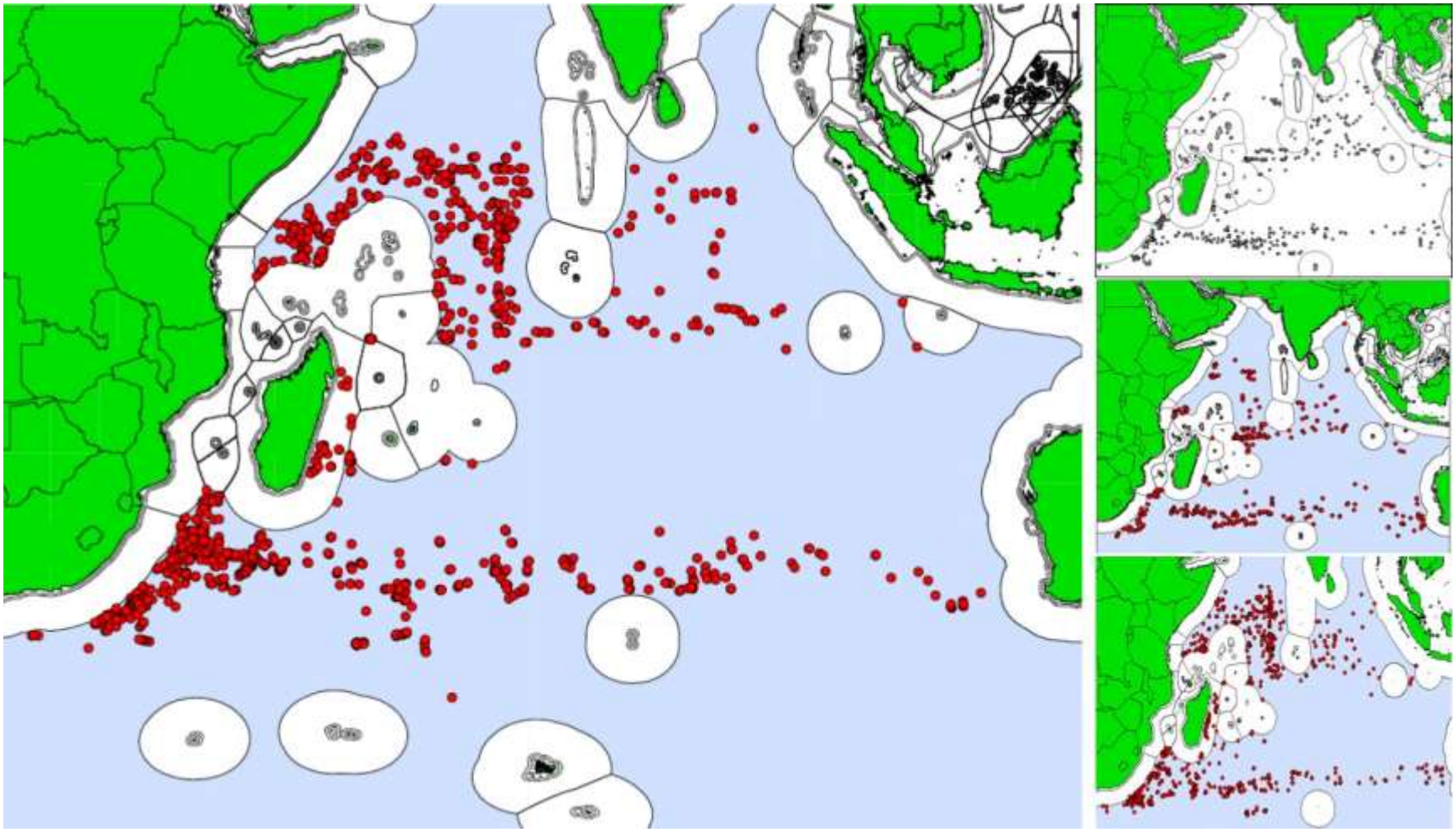

Figure 3 Transhipment locations during 2017 (main), 2014 (top right), 2015 (middle right) and 2016 (bottom right).

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. As in 2016 a number of transhipments occurred within the Malagasy EEZ, these were all undertaken by the same vessel and had been previously 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.

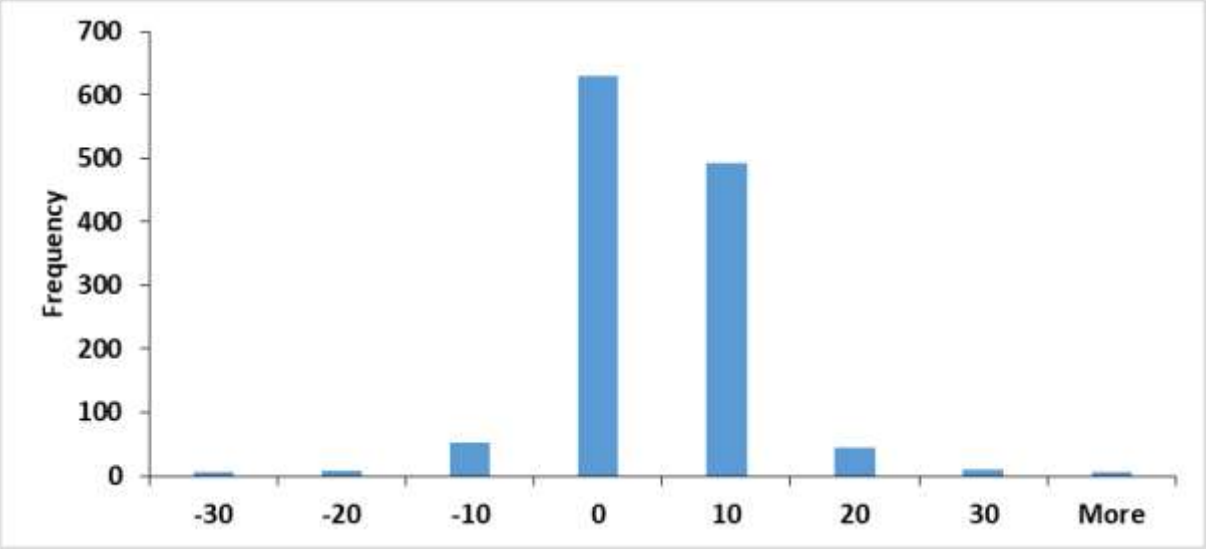

Figure 4 Difference in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (all species).

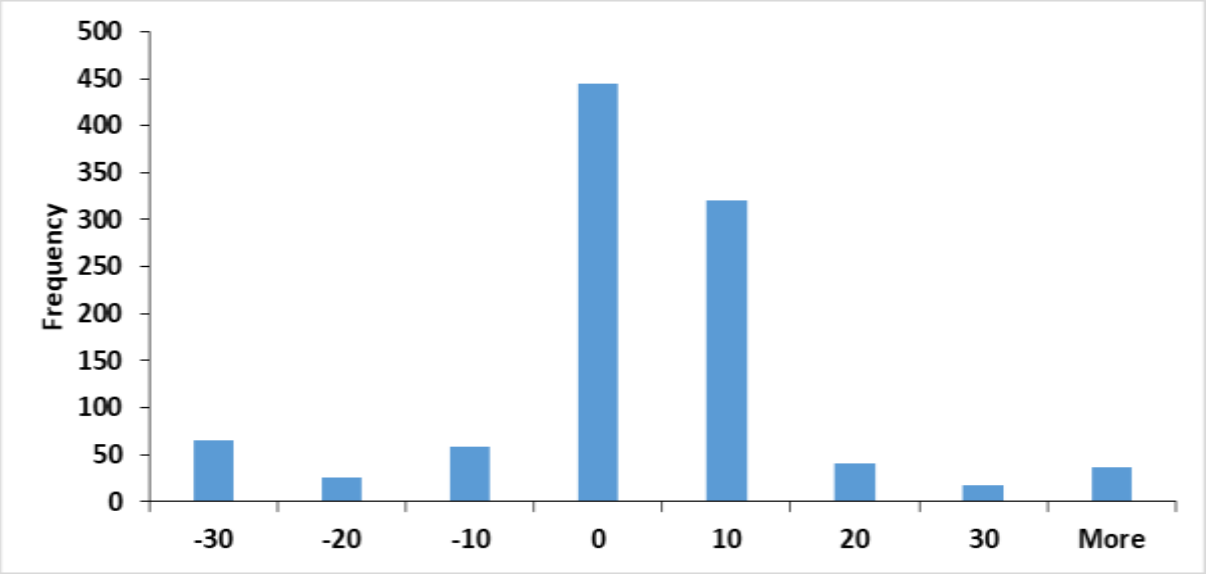

Figure 5 Differences in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (tuna species only).

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, 94% of estimates were within 10% of the vessel's declaration, with the vessel declaring more than the observer's estimate approximately 44% of the time. A similar trend is seen if only tuna products are considered (82% and 41%).

For the main causes in discrepancies between declared and observed weights see previous contractor's reports.

2.2 Species Identification

The main species transhipped (ordered by weight) during 2017 were albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) (13,874t), oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*) (10,924t), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) (9,910t) and yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) (8,246t), 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 2017, southern bluefin tuna were transhipped and declared on 63 occasions during 14 different deployments, with a total of 1,027.8 tonnes being transferred (Table 1).

Table 1 Transhipments of Southern Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) declared during 2017.

Deployment No.	CV Name	CV IOTC #	Observer Name	Number of Transhipments	Total Declared Weight (t)
403	KAIHO MARU	8468	Brandon Scott	2	2.022
410	MEITA MARU	8461	Belinda Moya	1	1.288
425	CHITOSE	15114	Ivan Barac	10	61.593
432	MEITA MARU	8461	Pedro Costa	10	83.392
434	IBUKI	14787	Brandon Scott	1	2.576
439	GENTA MARU	13783	Levent Ali Erkal	3	232.991
444	TAISEI MARU NO.15	8465	Tony Dimitrov	2	64.048
447	CHITOSE	15114	Belinda Moya	21	345.921
448	SEIHO	8468	Jose Miguel Garcia Rebollo	4	65.433
454	MEITA MARU	8461	Henry John Heyns	4	142.643
456	GENTA MARU	13783	Levent Ali Erkal	1	20.318
458	VICTORIA II	8452	Jonathan Newton	1	2.313
464	FUTAGAMI	8453	Sami Yildiz	1	0.313
467	TAISEI MARU NO.24	8466	Jeffrey Heinecken	2	2.887
403	KAIHO MARU	8468	Brandon Scott	2	2.022
410	MEITA MARU	8461	Belinda Moya	1	1.288

4 Vessel checks

The roles and responsibilities of the observers with regards to at sea vessel checks are outlined in Annex 3 of Resolution 17/06 and the differences in the procedures for vessel checking were highlighted in the 2013 ROP report (IOTC-2013-CoC10-04b).

A total of 1,259 transhipments were undertaken by 395 different LSTLVs during 2017. Checks were carried out on the LSTLVs 1,224 times. In most cases the LSTLV was boarded for checks, however on 35 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 11 times. The number of times individual LSTLVs were checked in 2017 is shown in Figure 6.

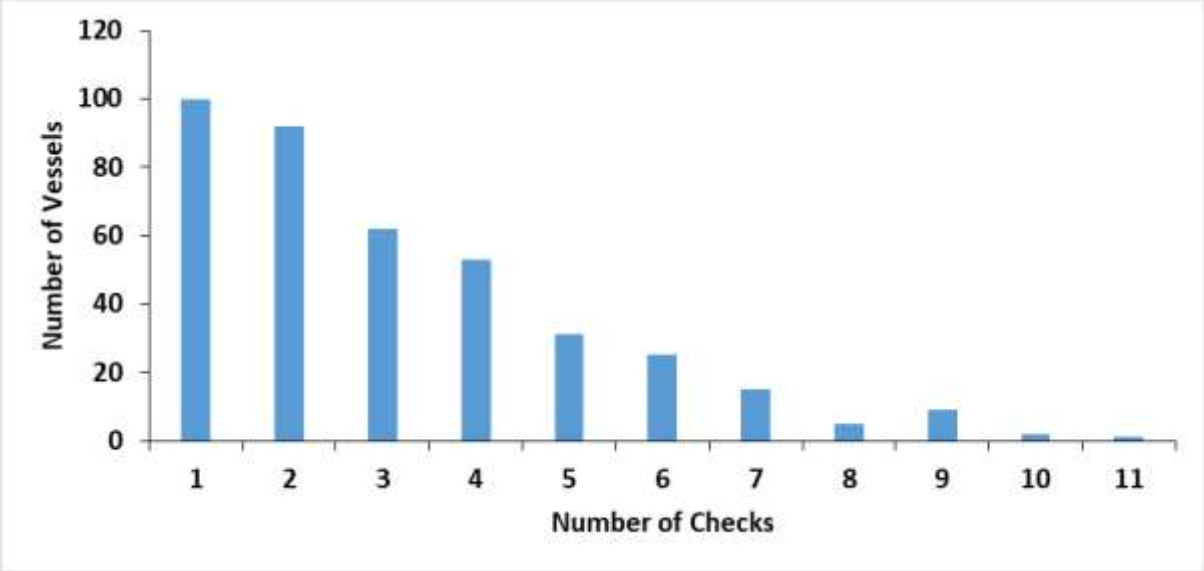

Figure 6 Number of times vessels checked in 2017.

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 2018-09 summarising possible infractions observed under the Regional Observer Programme during 2017

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 2017, two vessels that were boarded did not produce a valid ATF when requested by the observer.

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

On twenty-two 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 42 occasions, between 37 vessels that were boarded, no VMS unit was shown to the observer. Of those shown, in 17 cases the power light did not appear to be on or no power light could be found or seen.

Observers record the type of unit used on each vessel. A guide was developed with the most common units to assist them with this and to improve consistency, this was updated in 2017 and now contains 17 types of units. The updated guide is shown in Appendix 1.

d. Examine the logbook. Every vessel that transhipped also had its logbook examined. A summary of logbooks observed by category is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of logbook checks made in 2017.

Logbook format	Number
Logbooks Shown	1259
Matching the Flag State template	1238
Printed	1232
Electronic	27
Unbound (Printed)	33
Unnumbered (Printed)	55

e. Verify whether any of the catch on board resulted from transfers from other vessels, and check on documentation on such transfers. There was no evidence presented to the observers of LSTLVs transhipping fish with other LSTLVs during 2017.

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 3 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 3 Summary of checks on LSTLV identifiers

Identification check	Number of occasions
Vessel name	14
Vessel IRCS	2
Vessel national registration number	23

There is no IOTC requirement for vessels to have their national registration number marked on the superstructure. Table 3 refers to occasions where the number was marked but could not be verified or was incorrect.

5 Other Possible Infractions

There were no other potential infractions observed.

6 Observer Training

There are currently 100 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 2017 there were no deployments refused by an observer on the grounds of safety.

Most notably, the biggest Health and Safety concern for 2017 was the overloading of carrier vessels while at sea. On a number of occasions observers reported large numbers of crew (up to 26 on two occasions) being transhipped from fishing vessels to the carrier. On a single occasion the observer reported being intimidated by the vessel captain after reporting the number of passengers being taken on board to the consortium.

This was a consistent issue that had been addressed several times by the consortium throughout the year. It was agreed with the Secretariat that more drastic measures had to be taken when this was encountered. The consortium agreed upon a new protocol (established February 2018) where vessel are to provide copies of safety certificates detailing the safe carrying capacity of the vessel prior to deployment. Observers are now to record the crew manifest and report on any cases of overloading upon embarkation. The observers are also mandated to record any changes to the vessels complement and are required to report this in their 5 day reports. Any breaches of the vessels certified carrying capacity will be dealt with immediately; including recalling the carrier vessel to disembark the observer at the closest port.

While the conditions on most of the vessels are to a good standard there are a number of vessels where hygiene standards are low. Specifically where several vessels had to be cautioned that an observer would not be deployed on the vessel until derating certification had been provided to the consortium. The observers provide generally consistent feedback on the CVs maintaining a lack of adequate hard hats or safety gear besides work boots being worn by the crew while working on deck.

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


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


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

16. BEAM Oceana 800


17. Cobham/SAILOR 250 FLEETBROADBAND