

29 March 2019

**IOTC CIRCULAR
2019-14**

Dear Sir/Madam

COMMUNICATION FROM JAPAN REGARDING OBSERVER DATA

Please find attached a communication from Japan regarding observer data recorded in certain trips of Japanese large-scale longline vessels fishing for southern bluefin tuna.

Yours sincerely



Christopher O'Brien
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

- Letter from Japan

Distribution

IOTC Contracting Parties: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Comoros, Eritrea, European Union, France (Territories), Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep of), Japan, Kenya, Rep. of Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, United Rep. of Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom (OT), Yemen. **Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties:** Liberia, Senegal. **Intergovernmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. Chairperson IOTC. Copy to:** FAO Headquarters, FAO Representatives to CPCs.

This message has been transmitted by email only



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March 27, 2019

Mr. Christopher O'Brien
Executive Secretary
Indian Ocean Tuna Commission

Subject: Observer data recorded in certain trips of Japanese large-scale tuna longline vessels fishing for southern bluefin tuna

Mr. Christopher O'Brien,

In December, 2018, National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries (NRIFS) informed FAJ that they have found suspicious and/or inconsistent descriptions on seabird and other species data in certain observer reports recorded on Japanese large-scale longline vessels fishing for southern bluefin tuna in high-latitude areas of the southern hemisphere. Upon this, FAJ started its investigation into such observer reports.

Although the investigation is still underway, FAJ has recognized that there are serious lacks and/or modifications in seabird and other species data in the observer reports recorded in certain fishing trips conducted in 2018 as follows;

CY 2018 3 trips (out of 11 trips for southern bluefin tuna) 128 data fields.

Since the observer data from these 3 trips contain serious concerns of their reliability, I would like to request that your Secretariat suspend the use of them for the time being. My staffer will notify the Secretariat of the list of the trips concerned. We will update the results of the investigation in due course.

Please circulate this letter to all CPCs.

Yours sincerely,

Shingo Ota

Japanese Commissioner to the IOTC