

# A Summary of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme During 2018

IOTC

Annual Contractors' Report

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## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acronyms</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2 Sampling</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1 Weight estimations .....	7
2.2 Species Identification .....	8
<b>3 Southern bluefin tuna</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>4 Vessel checks</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>5 Other Possible Infractions</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>6 Observer Training</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>7 Other Issues</b> .....	<b>11</b>
7.1 Health and Safety .....	11
7.2 Waste disposal .....	12
7.3 Vessel cooperation .....	12

## List of Tables

Table 1 Transshipments of Southern Bluefin tuna .....	8
Table 2 Summary of logbook checks made in 2018. ....	10
Table 3 Summary of checks on LSTLV identifiers .....	10

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Percentage contribution by fleet to the total number of IOTC transhipments during 2018. ....	5
Figure 2 Observer's deployed on the IOTC ROP in 2017 and 2018 .....	5
Figure 3 Transhipment locations in 2018.....	6
Figure 4 Difference in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (all species) .....	7
Figure 5 Difference in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (tuna species only) .....	7
Figure 6 Number of times vessels checked in 2018. ....	9

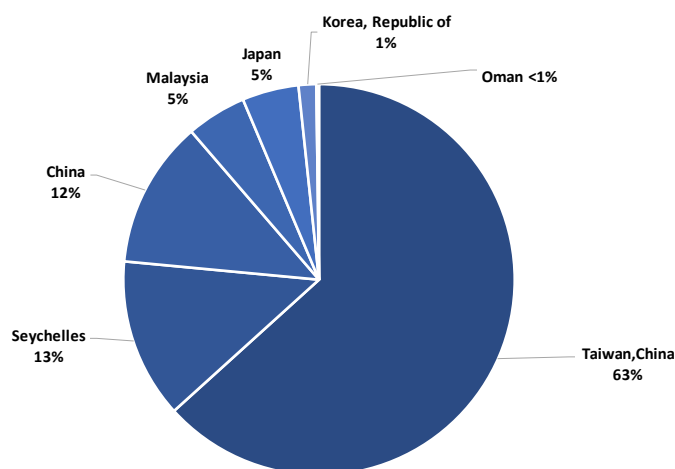
## Acronyms

ATF	Authorisation to Fish
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CMF	Catch Monitoring Form
CoC	Compliance Committee
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
WPICMM	Working Party on the Implementation of Conservation and Management Measures

# 1 Introduction

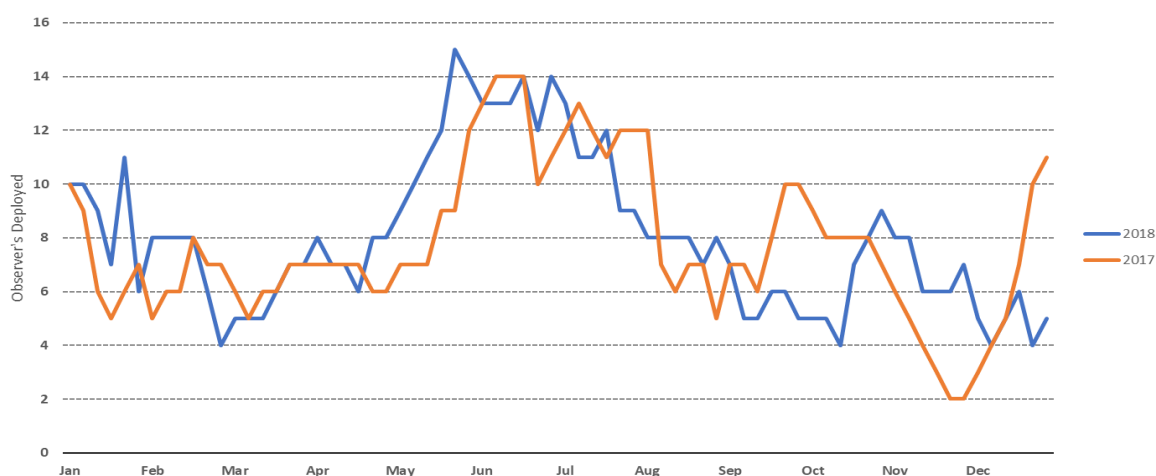
During the calendar year 2018, the Regional Observer Programme (ROP) monitored a total of 1,370 transshipments from Large Scale Tuna Longline Fishing Vessels (LSTLVs) within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's (IOTC) Area of Competence; 63% were from the fleet of Taiwan, Province of China, with Seychellois, Chinese, Malaysian, Japanese and Korean LSTLVs accounting for 13%, 12%, 5%, 5% and 1% respectively (Figure 1). Oman also undertook three transshipments (<1%). In addition, there were two transshipments undertaken between two CVs flagged to Panama and Singapore, with the Panamanian vessel transferring fish to the Singaporean one, and *vice versa*. There were 111 more transshipments in 2018 than 2017 (1259), the proportions of transshipments made by each fleet are similar to those made in 2017.

Deployments occurred on Carrier Vessels (CVs) predominantly flagged to Taiwan, Province of China (30%). Deployments also occurred on carrier vessels flagged to Liberia (19%), Malaysia (17%), Panama (16%), Republic of Korea (10%), Japan (3%), Singapore (3%) and China (1%).



**Figure 1 Percentage contribution by fleet to the total number of IOTC transshipments during 2018.**

A summary of the ROP deployments (i.e. the number of CV trips with observers deployed on them) during 2018 is shown in Figure 2. There were a total of 63 deployments, (three additional deployments were cancelled). Ten of these continued onto or came from the regulatory area of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The number of deployments was highest during May and June, with 15 and 14 deployments respectively. Figure 2 shows the annual cycle of deployments in 2018 as well as 2017 as a comparison.



**Figure 2 Observer's deployed on the IOTC ROP in 2017 and 2018.**



**Figure 3 Transshipment locations in 2018 (main image), in 2015 (top right), 2016 (middle right) and 2017 (bottom right).**

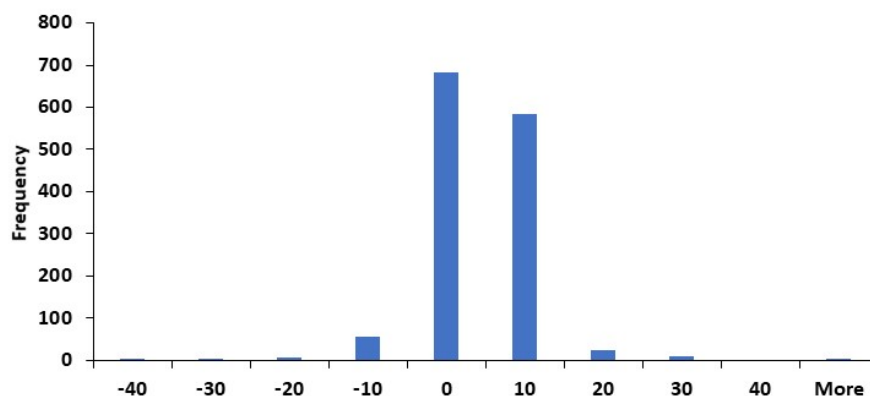
NB: The spatial distribution of transshipments is similar to previous years with distinctive 'bands' of transshipments at around 12° and 34° south, though with a greater number of transshipments occurring in the western Indian Ocean. As in 2016 and 2017 a number of transshipments occurred within the Malagasy EEZ, these were all undertaken by the same vessel and had been previously authorised by the Malagasy Ministry of Fisheries. No other transshipments took place in EEZs.



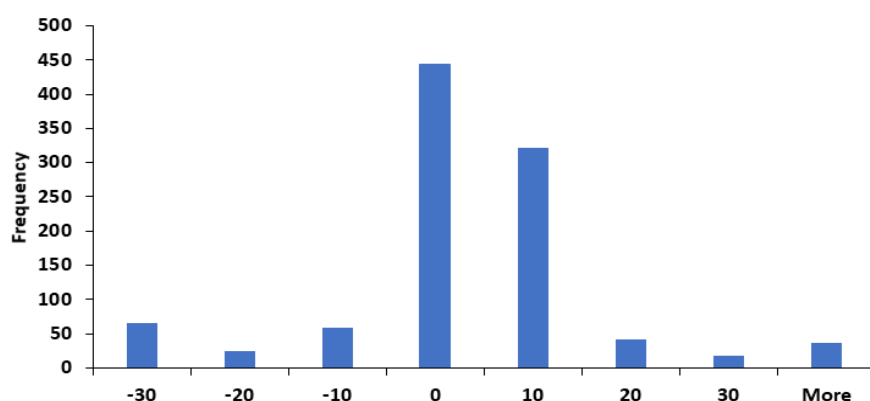
## 2 Sampling

### 2.1 Weight estimations

Weight estimation procedures have been previously discussed in the Review of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme<sup>1</sup>. 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 Difference in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (tuna species only)**

Negative differences represent transshipments 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, 96.57% of estimates were within 10% of the vessel's declaration, with the vessel declaring more than the observer's estimate approximately 54.60% of the time. A similar trend is seen if only tuna and tuna like species products are considered, with 92.74% of observer estimates falling within a 10% difference of the vessel's declaration. However, in these cases, only 6.05% of vessels declared more tuna products transhipped than the observer's estimates.

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

<sup>1</sup> MRAG and CapFish (2010). Review of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme. CoC48\_Add1[E]

## 2.2 Species Observed Transferred

The main species transhipped by weight, as recorded by the observer during 2018, were albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) (16,454t), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) (11,047t), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) (9,254t), and oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*) (8,091t), with lesser quantities of mixed tunas (5,018t), and other species including swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) (4,662t), southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) (1,420t), various shark species (Selachimorpha (Pleurotremata)) (1,373t), opah (*Lampris guttatus*) (1,086t), Indo-Pacific blue marlin (*Makaira mazara*) (982t), Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) (506t), striped (*Tetrapturus audax*) (360t) and black marlin (*Makaira indica*) (244t). Billfish unclassified (*Istiophoridae*) accounted for 5,97t and fish declared as Other unclassified accounted for 653t.

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 transshipment. During 2018, southern bluefin tuna were transhipped and declared on 62 occasions during 9 different deployments, with a total of 1,432 tonnes recorded by the vessel as being transferred (Table 1), this is about 12 tonnes more than the observed amount.

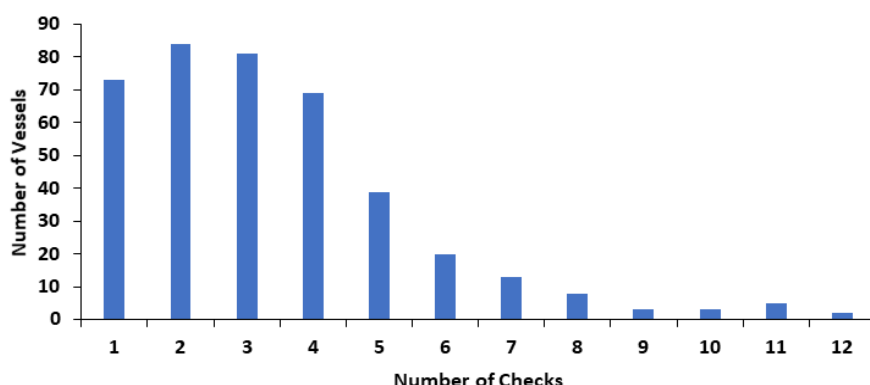
**Table 1 Transshipments of Southern Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) declared by vessels during 2018.**

Deploy ment No.	CV Name	CV IOTC #	Observer Name	Number of Transshipmen ts	Total Declared Weight (t)
484	TUNA QUEEN	8446	Llewelyn Lewis	4	17.831
494	CHITOSE	15114	Javier Guevara Vivo	17	167.765
499	KURIKOMA	8462	Henry John Heyns	2	1.341
514	SEIBU	16637	Carolina Brito Santana	7	106.143
515	TAISEI MARU NO.15	8465	Llewelyn Lewis	1	60.265
516	GENTA MARU	13783	Aikaterini Kamposi	9	638.6
522	HARIMA	8440	Joaquim Bonito	15	394.302
523	SEIYU	8620	Peet Botes	6	5.818
526	CHIKUMA	14788	Carlos Manuel Neves da Costa Serrano	1	40.313

## 4 Vessel checks

The roles and responsibilities of the observers with regards to at sea vessel checks are outlined in Annex 3 of Resolution 18/06 and the differences in the procedures for vessel checking were highlighted in the 2013 ROP report (IOTC-2013-CoC10-04b).

A total of 1,370 transshipments were undertaken by 400 different LSTLVs during 2018. Checks were carried out on the LSTLVs 1,364 times. In most cases the LSTLV was boarded for checks on 1,296 occasions, however on 77 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 two LSTLVs checked 12 times. The number of times individual LSTLVs were checked in 2018 is shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6 Number of times vessels checked in 2018.**

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 2019-13 summarising possible infractions observed under the Regional Observer Programme during 2018.

Two transshipments in 2018 occurred between two reefers, the Harima and Chitose, during deployments 522/18 and 528/18.

**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 IOTC 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 2018, six vessels that were boarded did not produce a valid ATF when requested by the observer. On one occasion the ATF shown was out of date at the time of the last recorded fishing event. On three occasions a document other than the ATF (national / inspection certificate) was presented to the observer as the ATF. On two occasions no ATF was produced.

On 23 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, did not specify the Indian Ocean or the issuing authority could not be identified.

On 21 occasions the ATF was not produced, or a valid version was not presented at the time of transshipment. A version of the ATF was later faxed through to the observer on the CV after the transshipment.

**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 21 occasions, no VMS unit was shown to the observer. One of the most common potential infractions identified is whether vessels have switches placed near the VMS unit. This continues to be contentious with some fleets stating they can be installed for safety reasons, or that the vessel has two systems which it can switch on and off depending on the area or operation. A request was put to WPICMM at the last CoC meeting for advice

on whether observers should continue to highlight this (IOTC–2018–CoC15–R [E], Para 70). However no reference could be found to this in the WPICMM02 report.

Observers continue to record the type of unit used on each vessel according to a guide completed in 2017. A copy of the guide can be found annexed to the 2018 Contractor's report (IOTC-2018-CoC15-04b).

**d. Examine the logbook.** Every LSTLV 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 2018.**

Logbook format	Number
Logbooks Shown	1,371
Matching the Fleet's template	1,363
Printed	1,315
Electronic	50
Unbound (Printed)	13
Unnumbered (Printed)	25

**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 2018.

**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 IOTC Secretariat is notified. The IOTC 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 observer's 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 obscured / unreadable	43
Vessel name not consistent with database	9
IRCS obscured / unreadable	10
IRCS not consistent with database	4
Vessel national registration number	33

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

An observer reported their CV accepting transshipments of southern bluefin tuna from seven vessels over 12 transshipments that were not included in the TD and had no Catch Monitoring Form (CMF). The observer reported at least 16.68 tonnes of alleged transhipped southern bluefin tuna which were identified by him on the vessel at the time. The Consortium has noted the investigation and subsequent report by China, dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019 (IOTC Circular 2019-13).

## 6 Observer Training

There are currently 127 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 transshipments. Not all observers who have been trained are currently active and many have left the programme. There are currently 69 observers considered to be trained and actively participating on rotation in the IOTC ROP. 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 transshipments.

## 7 Other Issues

### 7.1 Health and Safety

During 2018 there were no deployments refused by an observer on the grounds of safety.

However, safety issues that have been raised include:

- **Lack of safety drills.** Few observers have been asked to participate in these and this is something each observer is asked to provide feedback on at each debriefing and include in their final report. The Consortium will look to implementing through the MoU a section highlighting that vessels must undertake safety drills prior to every deployment which should include the observer.
- **Being dropped into the ocean whilst transferring between the CV and LSTLV.** This was an accident but put down to the attitude of the winchman who was replaced, and fortunately no harm resulted to the observer. No other incidents occurred during this deployment.
- **The officers on watch (including captain) asleep on the bridge.** A bed had been set up and the observer also highlighted that at this time navigational aids were not in use. This was an obvious safety concern, the Consortium provided this feedback to the IOTC Secretariat and included it in the final report.
- **Armed security.** There were a number of vessels where armed security boarded the vessel as a safeguard against piracy. On one occasion it was reported that there had been a confrontation between the head of security and the vessel captain. As a result, the captain confiscated the security team's weapons and locked them in his cabin as he considered that the head of security posed a greater danger to the wellbeing of the vessel and crew than the risk of piracy.
- **The overloading of carrier vessels while at sea.** This was reported as a problem during 2017, mainly due to CVs taking on extra passengers during the trip or the presence of additional security guards. With the cooperation of the vessel companies this was less of a concern during 2018, with only three incidences reported. On one occasion the vessel was requested to disembark the excess compliment at the nearest port. The vessel cooperated by disembarking three passengers and one crew member. On the other two occasions the Consortium was made aware post deployment and raised this safety concern with the IOTC Secretariat and vessel operators. To ensure that observers are made aware of any overloading issues closer to the time, they report it in their five-day reports which they issue during the deployment.

All the above incidents have been reported in the observer's final reports.

Although not directly related to observer safety, observers continue to 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. There was also a report of an LSTLV captain striking a crew member while the vessels were transshipping.

While hygiene standards on most of the vessels are reported to be good, there are a number of vessels in which they continue to be low, and on several occasions the presence of cockroaches, rats and other vermin had been reported.

## **7.2 Waste disposal**

Waste disposal methods vary among CVs and most have operational waste disposal plans in place which includes having an incinerator on board, a waste compactor, instructions and containers to separate and store different waste products. However, this was not always the case and some have no disposal plan in place at all, or do not follow whatever they have in place. While no quantitative analysis has been done, the following are brief summaries of bad practices from the observer reports.

- Vessels that had no waste disposal plan in place would just dump it all over the side, this included, plastic, clothing, glass, food waste and on one observed occasion 220 litre oil drums. This occurred despite the fact they had an incinerator on board, carefully marked drums to separate waste and even a plaque confirming the obligations of their flag State to comply with international waste disposal legislation.
- Other vessels, without incinerators, or working incinerators, would attempt to store all waste (apart from galley waste) on board in sacks. However, in most cases the observer reported that that the observed waste sacks at the end of the trip did not represent the total waste (estimates of 15% and 20% were made) and it was not known what happened to the remaining sacks although on one occasion the observer reported them being dumped over the side at night.
- Nearly all vessels disposed of galley waste over the side, although in some cases this was non-organic and included glass bottles, metal cans and plastic wrapped in plastic bags.

The above examples do not represent the fleets as a whole and are included to highlight some of the problems that do exist. Other vessels are more diligent, for example after an oil spill that occurred during a transshipment the vessel made every effort to clean it up with absorbents which is stored for disposal at shore.

## **7.3 Vessel cooperation**

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