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## Liberia's National Report to the Scientific Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, 2019

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Submitted by the National Fish and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA)

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### INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, final scientific data for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year, <b>for all fleets other than longline</b> [e.g. for a National Report submitted to the IOTC Secretariat in 2018, final data for the 2018 calendar year must be provided to the Secretariat...]	YES
In accordance with IOTC Resolution 15/02, provisional <b>longline data</b> for the previous year was provided to the IOTC Secretariat by 30 June of the current year...	NO
Liberia has not carried out any scientific research in the IOTC Area of Competence and does not have fishing vessels operating therein; nevertheless, Liberia intends to provide relevant information on reefer (carrier) and support/supply vessels operating in the Area.	

## Executive Summary

The Republic of Liberia (Liberia) is situated within the east central Atlantic region of the Gulf of Guinea. Liberia has a coastline of about 570 km and a continental shelf averaging 34 km in width; its marine fishing grounds cover 186 322.2 km<sup>2</sup> within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In 2017, Liberia’s Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) was reduced from six (6) to three (3) nautical miles, and is reserved for artisanal and semi-industrial fishing activities. The fishing area extends from the shrimp-rich Shebro grounds bordering Sierra Leone in the west, to the Cavalla River Basin bordering the Ivory Coast in the east, and the tuna pelagic fishing grounds extending out into the Atlantic Ocean.

Liberia’s continental shelf area has sizable marine fish species. The main oceanic pelagic resources consist of tuna and tuna-like species, such as yellowfin tuna, bonito and marlin. Demersal fish species can also be found in marine waters, and are harvested on a commercial basis. Shrimp, crab and lobster are less abundant, but are of much higher value than finfish species, and are targeted for the export market.

Liberia has four main fisheries sectors and fishing activities are regulated by the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA). Major activities include registration and inspection of fishing vessels, granting of fishing and transshipment licenses and authorizations, recording of catch data, deployment of fisheries enumerators at landing sites, and investigating instances of non-compliance with relevant fishing measures and regulations and imposing penalties as deemed necessary. In 2010, the Fisheries Regulations were finalized. In January 2020, the new Fisheries Law was passed.

### 1. BACKGROUND/GENERAL FISHERY INFORMATION

Liberia has four (4) main fisheries sectors: Industrial, Artisanal, Inland, and Aquaculture. These sectors are governed by NaFAA. Industrial fishery in Liberia involves bottom trawlers targeting demersal fish and shrimp, purse seiners and long liners targeting offshore tuna resources, crab vessels and onshore cold storage facilities. All industrial fishing vessels fishing in Liberian waters are required to carry observers on board and functioning Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS). These vessels are also required to land their catches under inspection at the fishing pier in the Freeport of Monrovia; transshipment also takes place in port under inspection.

Artisanal fisheries are a key sector of marine fisheries in Liberia, providing food and livelihood to coastal communities throughout the country. There are approximately 3,300 canoes and more than 11,000 fishers operating actively from 114 fish landing sites along the coastline.

Inland fisheries freshwater bodies cover 15,050 km<sup>2</sup> (14%) of the total area of Liberia. These include rivers, lakes, etc. that drain to the Atlantic coast. Inland fisheries contribute approximately 25% of fish consumed and are conducted from shore and dugout canoes at the artisanal level only, using a variety of fishing gear, including: hook and hand line, fishing net, etc. Major species targeted in this sector includes tilapia, African catfish, and hecterites.

Aquaculture is very limited, occurring for the most part as small, freshwater ponds. There are approximately 1050 small-scale fish farmers.

## 2. FLEET STRUCTURE

The following vessels are authorized to engage in transshipment activities in the IOTC Convention Area:

Vessel	Type	GT	LOA (m)
ACONCAGUA BAY	Reefer	9,074	140.44
BALTIC PROSPERITY	Tanker	11,383	142.5
CHIKUMA	Reefer	6,558	134.15
EVEREST BAY	Reefer	8,739	141.01
FUJI BAY	Reefer	9,070	148.50
HAI XING	Tanker	11,191	138.1
HE SHUN	Reefer	12,413	152.94
HUMBOLDT BAY	Reefer	9070	148.58
JASON	Tanker	3,978	105.5
LAGOON PHOENIX	Reefer	7313	134.02
MEITA MARU	Refrig. Cargo	3,802	106.86
PRINCE OF SEAS	Reefer	6,363	130.50
SEALION	Tanker	3,978	105.5
SIERRA QUEEN	Reefer	5,918	133.92
TAIHO MARU	Refrig. Cargo	3,858	98.28
TENHO MARU	Refrig. Cargo	3,496	94.65
TRITON REEFER	Reefer	8,818	144.03
WATER PHOENIX	Reefer	7,300	134.02
WEI NING	Reefer	9,829	141.8
WHITNEY BAY	Reefer	8,739	141.00

## 3. CATCH AND EFFORT (BY SPECIES AND GEAR)

Liberian flagged vessels operating in the IOTC Area of Competence are engaged in transshipment activities only.

In 2019, certain Liberian flagged vessels carried out a number of transshipments with other vessels in the IOTC Area. Transshipment data for 2019 will be provided by September 15 2020.

## 4. RECREATIONAL FISHERY

Liberian flagged vessels have not conducted any recreational fishing activities in the IOTC Area of Competence.

## 5. ECOSYSTEM AND BYCATCH ISSUES

Not applicable.

### 5.1 Sharks

Not applicable.

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**5.2 Seabirds**

Not applicable.

**5.3 Marine Turtles**

Not applicable.

**5.4 Other ecologically related species**

Not applicable.

**6. NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING SYSTEMS [Mandatory]**

**6.1. Log-sheet data collection and verification** (including date commenced and status of implementation).

Currently, vessels engaged in transshipment activities utilize the IOTC transshipment declaration to report the species, quantities, etc. transhipped in the IOTC Area.

**6.2. Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)**

Liberia has adopted the satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS) for all vessels operating in waters inside and outside the EEZ, especially those operating in the IOTC Area and other managed areas. The vessel monitoring units provide to the Fish Monitoring Center (FMC) real-time position reports (with speed and heading), connects to a tablet, tracks, logs, generate transshipment data, and emails, and are tamper resistant. Information from the VMS is transmitted on an hourly basis.

**6.3. Observer programme** (including date commenced and status; number of observer, include percentage coverage by gear type).

Currently, Liberia does not participate in the IOTC's observer program.

**6.4. Port sampling programme**

Not applicable to Liberia.

**6.4. Unloading/Transshipment**

In 2019, Liberian flagged vessels carried out a number of transshipments of various species in the IOTC Area; said information will be provided by September 2020.

**7. NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS**

Liberia has not conducted any research programs in the IOTC Area of Competence.

## 8. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE IOTC RELEVANT TO THE SC.

Scientific requirements contained in Resolutions of the Commission, adopted between 2005 and 2019.

Res. No.	Resolution	Scientific requirement	CPC progress
15/01	On the recording of catch and effort by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 1-10	Liberia does not have fishing vessels in the IOTC Area, only carrier/receiving and support vessels.
15/02	Mandatory statistical reporting requirements ...	Paragraphs 1-7	Liberia implements by providing mandatory reporting requirements for its vessels engaged in transshipment activities in the IOTC Area.
18/05	On conservation measures for the conservation of billfishes, striped marlin, black marlin and blue marlin, etc.	Paragraph 4	N/A
13/04	On the conservation of cetaceans	Paragraphs 7- 9	N/A
13/05	On the conservation of whale sharks ( <i>Rhincodon typus</i> )	Paragraphs 7- 9	N/A
13/06	On a scientific and management framework on the conservation of shark species caught in association with IOTC managed fisheries	Paragraph 5-6	N/A
12/09	On the conservation of thresher sharks (family alopiidae) caught in association with fisheries in the IOTC area of competence	Paragraphs 4-8	N/A
12/06	On reducing the incidental bycatch of seabirds in longline fisheries.	Paragraphs 3-7	N/A
12/04	On the conservation of marine turtles	Paragraphs 3, 4, 6-10	N/A
11/04	On a regional observer scheme	Paragraph 9	Liberia does not participate in the IOTC's regional observer scheme; however, Liberia's observer program was established in 2011 under the 2010 Fisheries Regulations. Per the Regulations, registered industrial fishing vessels are required to have 100% observer coverage. Moreover, the program consists of approximately eighteen (18) observers who were trained on survey information, data collection, stock assessment, at-sea safety measures, etc. by qualified personnel from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
17/05	Concerning the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC	Paragraphs 1-12	N/A
18/07	On measures applicable in case of non-fulfilment of reporting obligations in the IOTC	Paragraph 1	Liberia has measures in place to ensure it fulfils the reporting obligations as required by the Commission.