

A Summary of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme During 2019

IOTC

Annual Contractors' Report

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Acronyms

ATF	Authorisation to Fish
CCSBT	Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CDS	Catch Documents Scheme
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
SOLAS	Safety of Life at Sea
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

1 Introduction

During the calendar year 2019, the Regional Observer Programme (ROP) monitored a total of 1,317 transhipments from Large Scale Tuna Longline Fishing Vessels (LSTLVs) within the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's (IOTC) Area of Competence; 66% were from the fleet of Taiwan, Province of China, with Chinese, Seychellois, Malaysian, Japanese and Korean LSTLVs accounting for 16%, 8%, 4.5%, 4% and 1% respectively (Figure 1). Kenya and Oman also undertook two and one transhipments respectively (<1%). There were 55 fewer transhipments in 2019 than 2018 (1372), the proportions of transhipments made by each fleet are similar to those made in 2018.

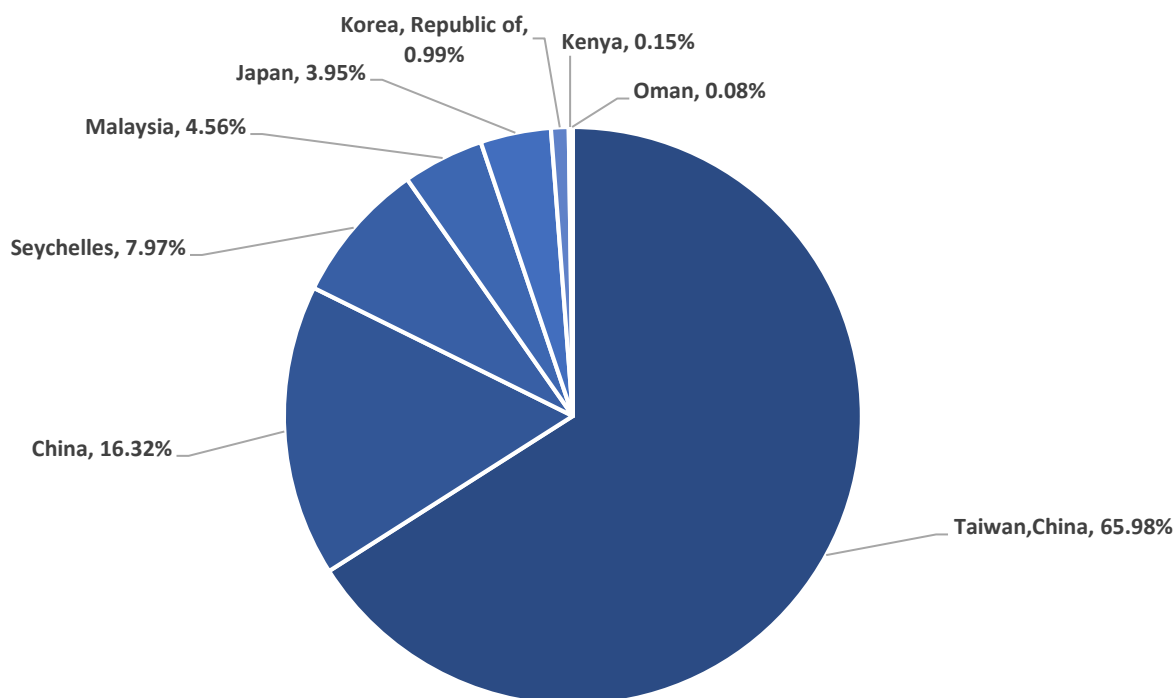


Figure 1 Percentage contribution by fleet to the total number of IOTC transhipments during 2019.

Deployments occurred on Carrier Vessels (CVs) predominantly flagged to Taiwan, Province of China (32%). Deployments also occurred on carrier vessels flagged to Panama (19%), Malaysia (14%), Liberia (11%), Republic of Korea (11%), Japan (8%) and Singapore (5%).

A summary of the ROP deployments (i.e. the number of CV trips with observers deployed on them) during 2019 is shown in Figure 2. There were a total of 65 deployments, (two additional deployments were cancelled). Eighteen 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 March and July, with 11 and 12 deployments respectively. Figure 2 shows the annual cycle of deployments in 2019 as well as 2018 as a comparison.

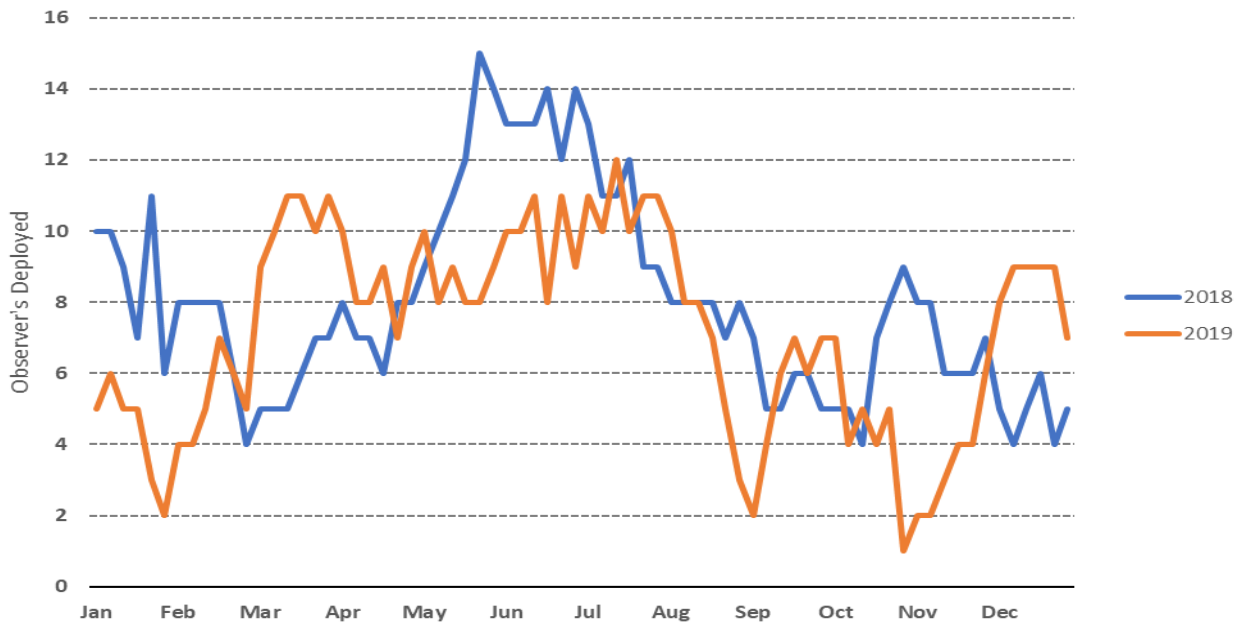


Figure 2 Observer's deployed on the IOTC ROP in 2018 and 2019.

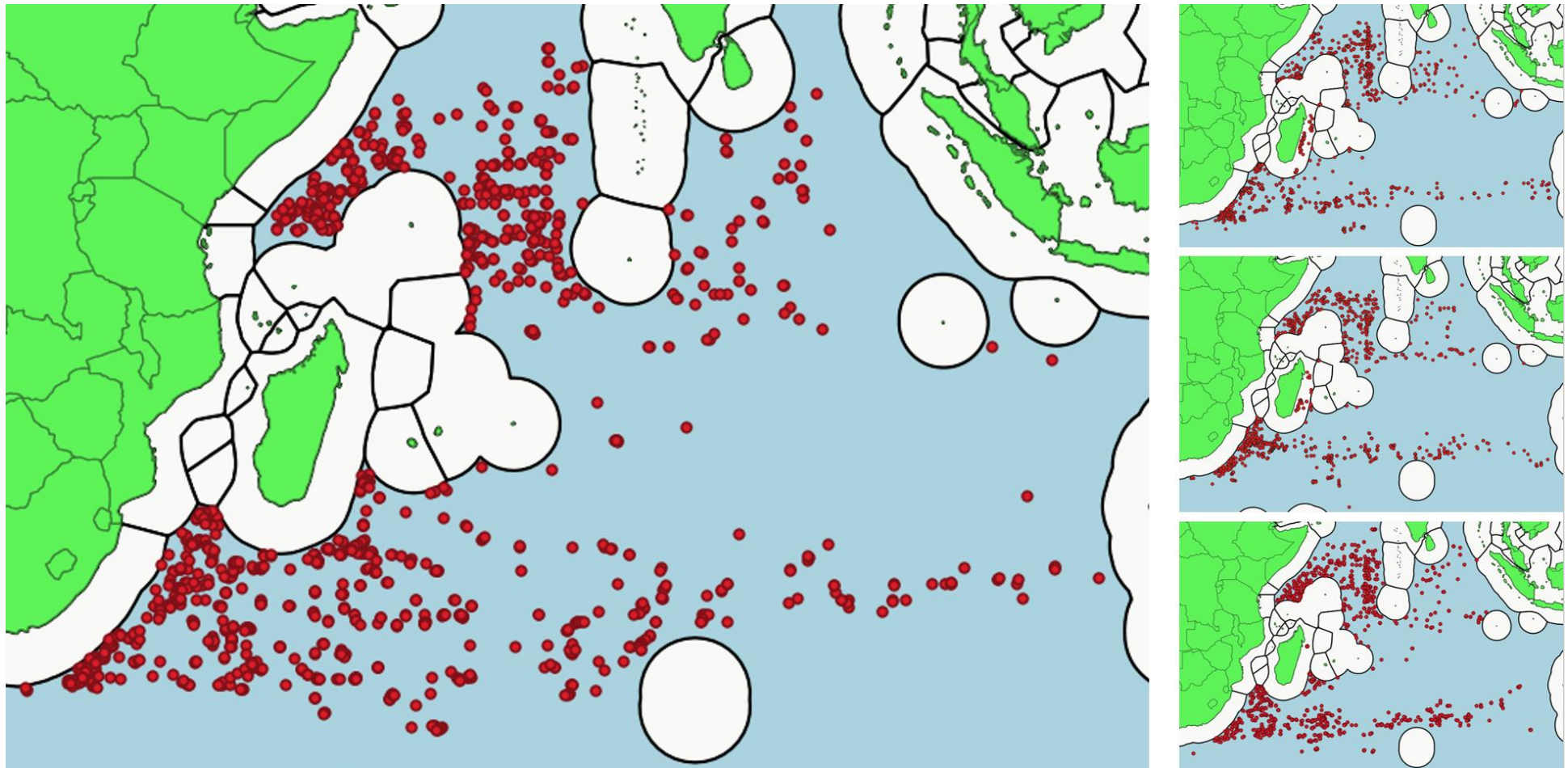


Figure 3 Transshipment locations in 2019 (main image), in 2016 (top right), 2017 (middle right) and 2018 (bottom right).

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. No transshipments took place in EEZs in 2019.

2 Sampling

2.1 Weight estimations

Weight estimation procedures have been previously discussed in the Review of the IOTC Regional Observer Programme¹. 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.

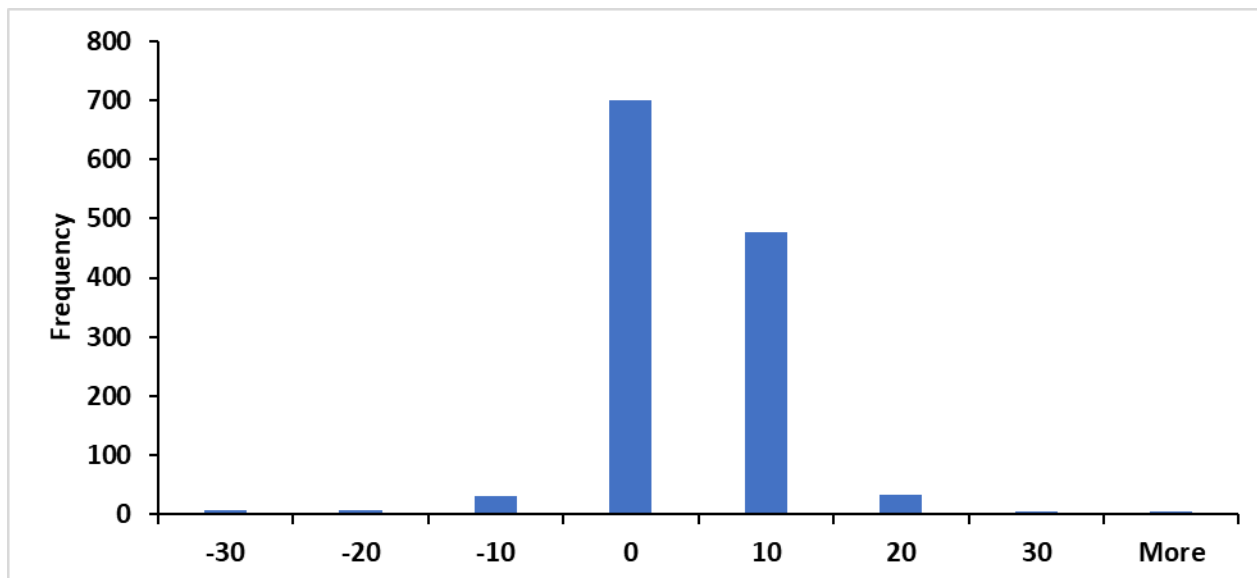


Figure 4 Difference in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (all species)

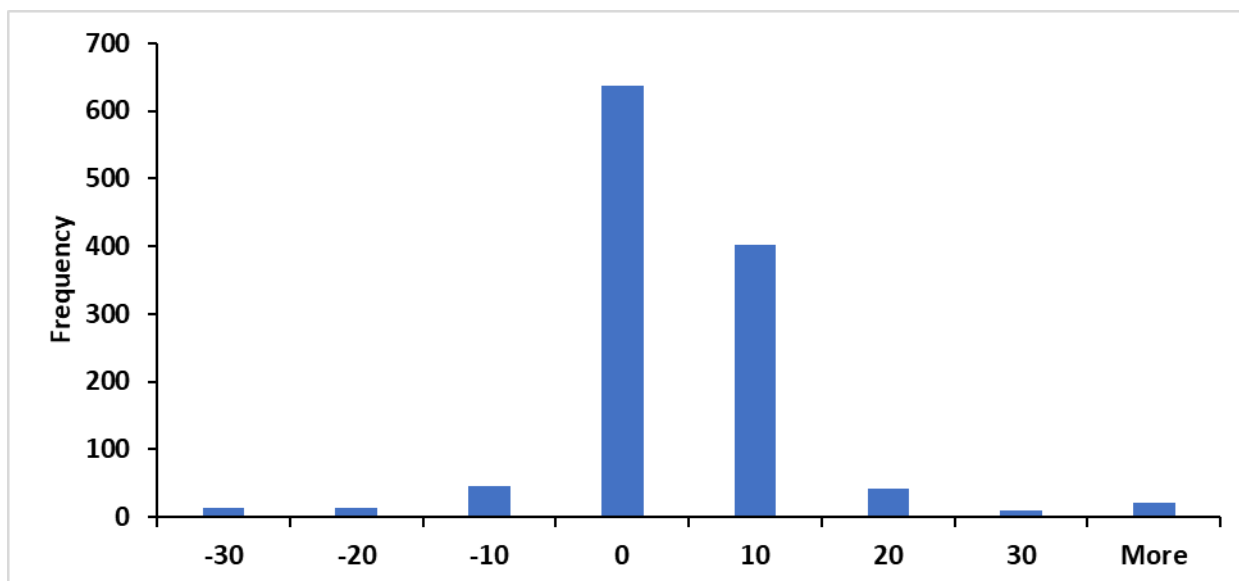


Figure 5 Difference in observed weight compared to vessel declared weight (tuna species only)

Negative differences represent 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, 95% of estimates were within 10% of the vessel's declaration, with the vessel declaring more than the observer's estimate approximately 4% of the time. A similar trend is seen if only tuna and

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

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tuna like species products are considered, with 92% of observer estimates falling within a 10% difference of the vessel's declaration. However, in these cases, only 6% 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.

2.2 Species Observed Transferred

The total quantity of tuna and tuna like species transhipped in 2019 was 63,650t. The main five species transhipped by weight, as recorded by the observers during 2019 were: yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) (16,690t), albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) (16,118t), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) (9,270t), oilfish (*Ruvettus pretiosus*) (8,034t), and swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) (4,288t). Lesser quantities (greater than 100t) were transhipped of: southern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) (1,434t), Indo-Pacific blue marlin (*Makaira mazara*) (1,090t), opah (*Lampris guttatus*) (472t), striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*) (391t), skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) (287t), blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) (273t), black marlin (*Makaira indica*) (271t), Indo-Pacific sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*) (125t), Dorado (*Coryphaena hippurus*) (117t). A number of fish were not classified by species, these include shark + pelagic shark nei (2,090t + 316t), billfish (306t), unidentified tuna products (245t), mixed species products (231t) and other fish unclassified (1,197t). A number of other species were transhipped in small quantities totalling 405t: Atlantic blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), Atlantic white marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*), Butterfly kingfish (*Gasterochisma melampus*), Escolar (*Lepidocybium flavobrunneum*), King mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*), Mako sharks (*Isurus spp.*) - Longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*) and Shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*), Pomfret (*Brama spp.*), Shortbill spearfish (*Tetrapturus angustirostris*), Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*), Wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*).

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 (CDS) 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 2019 transhipments of southern bluefin tuna were declared on 43 occasions during 12 different deployments, with a total of 1,396.5 tonnes recorded by the vessel as being transferred, this is about 37.5 tonnes less than the observed amount.

Table 1 Transhipments of Southern Bluefin tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) declared by vessels during 2019.

Deployment No.	CV Name	CV IOTC #	Observer Name	Number of transhipments	Total Declared Weight (t)
528	CHITOSE	15114	Pedro Costa	2	26.034
538	TAISEI MARU NO.24	8466	Johann Beets	1	43.457
543	CHITOSE	15114	Eva María Vidal Cejuela	1	10.009
565	TAISEI MARU NO.24	8466	Bruce Biffard	3	199.487
566	CHITOSE	15114	Henry John Heyns	19	257.361
570	MEITA MARU	8461	Cansin Alkan	1	62.500
577	HARIMA	17037	Matea Haggia	5	249.937
579	SHOTA MARU	8459	Toni Lakos	3	343.658
581	TAISEI MARU NO.24	8466	Tony Dimitrov	1	63.173
588	SHOTA MARU	8459	Martin Emanuel	1	63.000
592	CHITOSE	15114	Peet Botes	4	11.537
593	HSIANG HAO	17244	Rebeca Ocon	2	66.387

4 Vessel checks

The roles and responsibilities of the observers with regards to at sea vessel checks are outlined in Annex IV of Resolution 19/06 and the differences in the procedures for vessel checking were highlighted in the 2013 ROP report (IOTC-2013-CoC10-04b).

A total of 1,317 transhipments were undertaken by 367 different LSTLVs during 2019. On 1,234 occasions the LSTLV was boarded for checks, however on 83 occasions the vessel was not boarded but instead logbooks and the Authorisation to Fish (ATF) were passed over to the observer on the CV. The number of times individual LSTLVs were checked in 2019 is shown in Figure 6.

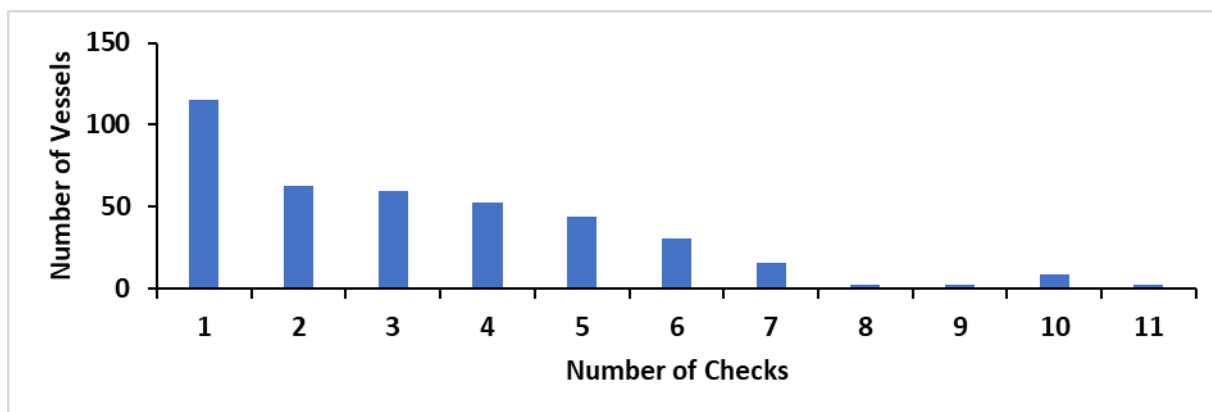


Figure 6 Number of times vessels checked in 2019.

A brief summary of the results of the LSTLV checks is given below. Full details of the possible infractions can be found in the document “IOTC-2020WPICMM03-08a” summarising possible infractions observed under the Regional Observer Programme during 2019.

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 19/04, 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 deployments 563 and 598, Transhipments 22 and 15 respectively, a Kenyan flagged vessel transhipped for the first time in the programme, a new ATF template was provided by Kenya to the consortium to correct the reporting of the LSTLV Shang Jyi.

On 18 occasions the ATF was not produced, or a valid version was not presented at the time of transhipment. A version of the ATF was later faxed or emailed through to the observer on the CV after the transhipment. On four occasion the ATF shown was out of date at the time of the last recorded fishing event.

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 3 occasions, no VMS unit was shown to the observer, the LSTLV Captain instead indicating an AIS or power unit as the VMS. On one occasion, the vessel crew were not able to show the observer any VMS unit on board, a CLS LEO VMS unit was provided to the vessel by the carrier vessel during this transhipment. Previously one of the most common potential infractions identified was whether vessels have switches placed near the VMS unit. The WPICMM03 put forward the recommendation that the ROP observers are to no longer highlight VMS units fitted with switches as a possible infraction.

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 2019.

Logbook format	Number
Logbooks Shown	1,317
Matching the Fleet's template	1,314
Printed	1,283
Electronic	34
Unbound (Printed)	7
Unnumbered (Printed)	12

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 2019.

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 19/04. 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	40
Vessel name not consistent with database	11
IRCS obscured / unreadable	5
IRCS not consistent with database	2

5 Other Possible Infractions

None to highlight.

6 Observer Training

There are currently 133 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 70 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 2019 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.** This was previously raised in the Contractor's 2019 report and still continues to be an issue. Most vessels did not carry any safety drills during 2019 and in some instances, drills were conducted but without the participation of the observer. According to SOLAS Regulation 19, emergency training and drills should include: launching safety boats; safety lectures and demonstrations in safety exercise; fire safety and firefighting drills; launching fast rescue craft; Abandon ship, Oil spill, Emergency steering, Man overboard and Enclosed space rescue Drills. It is the Consortium's recommendation that vessels must include observer participation in all safety drills upon boarding the vessel and we will look into including this into the Memorandum of Understanding for next year.
- **The overloading of carrier vessels while at sea.** During 2019 the number of incidents where overloading occurred has fallen. Vessel captains have been very cooperative with observers and have disembarked passengers when this issue has been recognised.
- **Infestations.** 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, tick, bedbugs and other vermin had been reported. In the circumstance where the consortium had felt the conditions on board would be detriment to the observers health; the observer was disembarked at the next available opportunity and the consortium requested the provision of a sanitation certificate prior to deploying an observer to this vessel again.
- **Oil/ fuel spillage.** Oil/ fuel spillage was noted during a few deployments, although this was minimal. On one occasion, approximately 153L of fuel was spilled on deck. This was seen to be hosed off.
- **Sheng Fan No.126 – Collision between FV and CV.** On the 07/06/2019 at 18:00 transshipment commenced. The observer did not board the LSTLV for the on-board checks as the weather was bad and conditions were too dangerous. The bow mooring ropes between the CV and the LSTLV broke on three occasions during the transshipment while the fender ropes broke on two occasions. At 23:15, the captain of the CV decided to abort the transshipment as conditions worsened. The procedures that followed remained uncertain to the observer who left the lower deck for his own safety. The stern mooring ropes were loosened on the CV's side before the LSTLV had not warmed up the engines. The stern of the LSTLV drifted outwards while the bow mooring ropes were also loosened but not freed from the LSTLV. The LSTLV began to drift sideways down the portside of the CV with the LSTLV bow facing the CV's portside. Heavy swells caused the bow of the LSTLV to heave and crash down on the portside of the CV

between the two life rafts on the middle deck. Both portside life rafts were ruined with the one inflating and the painter hooking up on the stern of the CV. The portside of the CV was seriously indented. Once the LSTLV drifted clear of the CV the captain managed to start the engines and follow the CV. The collision was partially filmed by the observer.

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.

7.2 Repatriation Due to *force majeure*

During deployment 552/19, the observer was repatriated under both medical grounds and due to circumstances surrounding the welfare of their immediate family. A replacement observer was provided by the consortium immediately to minimize disruption to the vessels schedule as far as possible. During this circumstance the vessel fully cooperated with the consortium in supporting the emergency repatriation of the observer. With this the consortium would like to extend its gratitude to the vessel operators and agents for their prompt response and understanding. The observer is not back on active duty.

7.3 Waste disposal

Waste disposal methods vary among CVs and most have operational waste disposal plans in place which includes having an incinerator on board, 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.

- Many vessels without incinerators would attempt to store all waste (apart from galley waste) on board in sacks, often tied down at the stern.
- Most vessels reportedly disposed of organic/ galley waste over the side multiple times a day.
- On a couple of occasions, only plastic bottles were separated out, with other waste being incinerated or stored unseparated. Ashes from the incinerator were also seen thrown overboard.
- One vessel - was reported to have no clear waste separation and waste frequently dumped overboard whilst the vessel was moving. One other vessel had inorganic waste thrown overboard, though only minor, in the form of cigarette butts and bits of paper.

The above examples do not represent the fleets as a whole and are included to highlight some of the problems that do exist.

The waste disposal reported in 2019 appears to be a great improvement on that in 2018, with mostly only minor reports of non-organic waste being thrown overboard. Most CVs were reported to have separate, often colour coordinated and labelled bins, with waste later disposed of in port. Waste was mostly separated into paper/ wood, plastic, glass, cans and oils. Most vessels are very careful about waste disposal; one CV Captain reprimanded LSTLVs for throwing waste overboard.

7.4 Vessel cooperation

Cooperation from both LSTLVs and CVs has again generally been good. The consortium has no issues to raise on difficulties operating with the vessels.