Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Commission des Thons de l'Ocean Indien
iotc ctoi

IOTC REGIONAL OBSERVER SCHEME

FIELD OBSERVER COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Observer competency should be standard throughout the IOTC ROS, independent of the organisation(s) in charge of training and managing CPC observers. The following list of basic observer competency standards ensures that observers have acquired / maintain the required competency level.

1. Understand the importance of personal physical and mental well-being to safety and morale and of maintaining effective communication and good working relationships on the vessel.
2. Able to comply with emergency procedures and to correctly use different types of life-saving appliances. Demonstrate knowledge of abandon ship procedures and sea survival techniques. Able to operate an EPIRB or equivalent.
3. Capable of identifying common health issues experienced onboard and fishing operation risks. Understand the importance of following safe working practices and wearing appropriate protective clothing and equipment as well as of following safety protocols and of being aware of emergency communication procedures.
4. Able to use vessel electronic equipment to fix a vessel position, to calculate vessel estimated position and time of arrival at a given point; and to collect parameters of meteorology and oceanography. Practical knowledge of the Beaufort scale.
5. Capable of using VHF/HF radios and send distress messages.
6. Understand the concept of target species; bycatch; non-target species, retained catch, discarded catch, overfishing, FAD, associated and free school, unfit for human consumption as defined by the IOTC.
7. Have satisfactory knowledge of the IOTC CMMs relevant to scientific observers;
8. Understand observer duties, code of conduct, status and procedures to follow onboard. Aware of the role & importance of the fisheries observer for the monitoring and management of tuna fisheries in the Indian Ocean.
9. Understands common nautical terminology. Recognises the basic layout of industrial tuna fishing vessels. Familiar with working and observation areas and common fishing operational scenarios for the relevant fisheries.
10. Familiar with the species of special interest that interact with industrial tuna fisheries, most common interactions and strategies to avoid and mitigate such interactions.
11. Capable of identifying and distinguishing between the main tuna species in their adult and juvenile forms and of using standard identification guides to identify species of billfish, sharks and other bycatch including marine turtles, seabirds and marine mammals.
12. Able to accurately measure and weigh fish and to collect biological samples according to IOTC ROS standard procedures.
13. Aware of IOTC ROS data gathering processes and priorities.
14. Capable of collecting and estimating catch weight, volumes and ratios according to ROS standard procedures. Conscious of the need to check consistency with entries made in the logbook and assist with filling a logbook.
15. Capable of collecting, formatting and accurately recording mandatory and recommended information as prescribed under the scheme.
16. Familiar with IOTC data reporting requirements and timelines for submission.