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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS**

WCPFC-SC18-AR/CCM-36

PANAMA

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

AQUATIC RESOURCES AUTHORITY OF PANAMA

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WESTERN & CENTRAL PACIFIC
FISHERIES COMMISSION (WCPFC)**

2021

PART I

INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

Submission: July, 2022

Information on Fisheries, Research and Statistics

Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision related to the provision of scientific data to the Commission.	Our participation as CNM status 2021 was with support fishing vessels activities. No scientific data to report.
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1. Abstract/Summary

The Republic of Panama is located in Central America, an isthmus with coasts in the Caribbean and the Pacific. It has approximately 1,581 islands and islets, and its territorial waters extend up to 200 nautical miles wide, over which the Republic of Panama has sovereignty and sovereign rights, as well as over the seabed. Panama has done a major management control of the fishing vessels since 1997, when it established the obligation of obtaining a fishing license on the high seas, for all fishing vessels and support fishing vessels.

Since 2008, the Republic of Panama has established a vessel monitoring system (VMS) through Executive Decree No. 17 of June 30, 2008 and it is a device mandatory installation on board vessels to obtain an international fishing or support license.

In the same year, the Republic of Panama approved the National Maritime Strategy and through Executive Decree No. 98-A of November 17, 2009, the National Action Plan to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing was approved.

Regarding Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, Panama is a contracting party of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), approved by Law No. 24 of 1954, and also ratified the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP), approved by Law No. 75 of 1998. Likewise, Panama is contracting party of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), approved by Law No. 74 of 1998 and has adopted the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) by Law No. 1 of 2013. Recently on July 7th, 2022, Panama became the new member of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Commission (SPRFMO), approved by Law No. 265 of 2021.

In addition, from the perspective of cooperation and compliance with RFMO fisheries management measures, Panama is a cooperating non-contracting party (CNCP) in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) for the period 2022.

Panama has taken significant steps within the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) to ensure compliance with all WCPFC obligations and deadlines. This has included large-scale changes to the internal structure of the ARAP, with staff dedicated to relevant areas of work (e.g., vessel registration, VMS, monitoring and control, transshipment reporting, reporting to the WCPFC, vessel consultation, among others). These measures have enabled Panama to strengthen its internal processes to a level sufficient to meet its WCPFC obligations.

Panama established a Technical Compliance Committee addressed by the Technical Cooperation and International Fisheries Affairs, which are in charge of the obligations with the international organizations. This team in conjunction of the General Directorates of the ARAP, are responsible for reporting and participation in WCPFC compliance matters and provides continuity in staffing (expertise and points of contact) to assist in effective and timely reporting.

Regarding the financial contribution, Panama has provided its yearly (2022) financial contribution within the period established by the Commission, in order to comply with the corresponding responsibilities and contribute with the operation of the Commission.

New groups of technicians and administrative personnel have been assigned to participate in the different meetings and processes of the Convention. Panama assumes the responsibilities of taking all required action (reporting, engagement, communication and attendance) in WCPFC processes, procuring our compliance improvement with all of WCPFC obligations.

In relation to the commitment to fight against illegal, undeclared, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Panama approved by Law No. 43 of September 14, 2016, the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) of FAO¹. In the same way through Law No. 130 of April, 2020, the inter-institutional commission was created to prevent, discourage and eliminate illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing and issues other provisions.

Panama, through the fishing Law No. 204 of March 18, 2021, regulate fishing activities, aquaculture, related activities and activities related to fishing. This law, promotes sustainable fishing methods, and introduces measures to ensure the sustainability of fishing activity and the preservation of marine resources for new generations.

¹ Point of contact and List of Port under PSMA are already registered in FAO

ANNUAL FISHERIES INFORMATION

2. Tabular Annual Fisheries Information

Our participatory right during 2021 in the WCPO was limited to the provision of carrier and bunker vessels; vessels that supply food, water and spare parts to carrier vessels that engage in transshipment activities.

3. Background

The Republic of Panama is Cooperating Non-Contracting Party of WCPFC, the number of vessels operating in this convention during 2021 were 173 Support Fishing Vessels. All of our vessels are regulated by law and licensed² to operate in the WCPFC in compliance with the Commission's recommendations and requirements with responsibilities of exercising effective control and ensuring that vessels comply with the provisions of the Convention.

4. Flag State Reporting

Number of active vessels in WCPFC Area as support fishing vessels.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No. of registered Vessels during the year	96	90	124	84	167	163	173 ³
No. of Active Vessels / Fish	28	74	59	58	87	84	92

5. Socio-economic factors

The Republic of Panama has achieved an average growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 15.3% in 2021, basically focused on services. This approach is also reflected in the budgetary allocations of government entities in charge of the activities that constitute the primary sector. These budgets generally cover the operation, but encounter limitations in research, investment and development of human capital.

The benefits registering (flagging) in Panama is related to all the other activities involving the vessel's need and auxiliary requirements. This activity generates many jobs along with the flag registry, crews of the ships as well as the company profits.

Panama has an important hub of international fish trade, including imports and re-exports of fish products, such as tuna. The country also exports significant quantities of shrimp, to the United States and the EU. Panama is a net exporting country and the value of exports is 2.5 times greater than the value of imports. The country imports low-priced products, such as canned tuna and canned sardines, which are important products for the country's food security⁴.

² Under Executive Decree No. 131 of 2020

³ About 140 cargo reefer vessels and another 33 bunker vessels.

⁴ FAO Fishery Country Profile of the Republic of Panama

6. Disposal of Catch

N/A. Panama doesn't have catch fishing vessels in WCPFC Convention area.

7. Onshore Developments

Panama is not a Coastal State, nor does it have facilities or processing plant or support facilities in WCPFC Convention area.

8. Future Prospect of the Fishery

We are in the position to keep our participatory rights in the future with support fishing vessels.

9. Status of the Tuna Fishery data collection systems

Long sheet data collection and verification – Transport and support vessels are required to submit data on their area operations based on format for such reporting which include a detailed fishing vessels transshipment and submitted for verification, showing information regarding the transshipment activities as date, location, species and quantity.

10. Research Activities Covering Target and non-Target species

Fisheries Information System: Panama reports statistics on all activities in the areas of Ports, Seafarers and discharge data of fishery products in domestic and international ports of the Republic of Panama.

The Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) is responsible for verifying the information of catch, landing, export and import of fishery products, biometric information of the target species, which are important to support the country's fisheries development.

No research activities were covering on target and non-target species in WCPFC Convention Area.

CMM 2009-06 [Transshipment], Para 11 (ANNEX II)

Annex II (a): Total quantities, by weight, of highly migratory fish stocks that were transhipped by carrier vessels:

a) offloaded and received;	b) transhipped in port, transhipped at sea in areas of national jurisdiction, and transhipped beyond areas of national jurisdiction	c) transhipped inside the Convention Area and transhipped outside the Convention Area;	d) caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area;	e) Species	f) Product Form	g) Fishing gear
offloaded	1845771,00	4275837,00		ALB		
	5202146,50	4505443,00		BET		
	53766130,50	4660952,00		YFT		
	0,00	440802,00		SWO		
	236232360,50	7493813,00		SKJ		
	0,00	135445,00		MLS		
	0,00	467263,00		OTH		
received	747831,00	9214936,00		ALB		
	10558582,50	10503495,00		BET		
	161657200,50	6025677,00		YFT		
	4803854,00	1152005,00		SWO		
	1170074103,50	241351,00		SKJ		
	1121469,00	247238,00		MLS		
	14601,00	741945,00		BUM		
495455,00	2275695,00		OTH			

Annex II (b): Number of transshipment involving highly migratory fish stocks covered by this measure by carrier vessels ... broken down by

a) offloaded and received	b) transhipped in port, transhipped at sea in areas of national jurisdiction, and transhipped beyond areas of national jurisdiction	c) transhipped inside the Convention Area and transhipped outside the Convention Area	d) caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area	e) fishing gear
offloaded	135	20		
received	966	552		

CMM 2019-03 [North Pacific Albacore], Para 3

No catches of albacore north of the equator and all fishing effort north of the equator in fisheries directed at albacore.

CMM 2019-04 [Sharks], Para 4

N/A

CMM 2011-03 [Impact of PS fishing on cetaceans], Para 5

N/A

CMM 2011-04 [Oceanic whitetip sharks], Para 3

N/A

CMM 2012-04 [Whale sharks], Para 06

N/A

CMM 2013-08 [Silky sharks], Para 3

N/A

Observer coverage (WCPFC decision – paragraph 13 of CMM 2009-06 from 15 June 2022)

Regarding the WCPFC decisions relating to Purse Seine Observer Coverage and At-Sea Transshipment Observers; in the transitional period from 15 June – 31 December 2022 Panama's carrier vessels will make best efforts to embark observers following the enabling guidelines in Annex A when applicable. The carrier vessel operator should request for an observer from observer provider(s) at least 30 days in advance of the planned trip. In the event that the vessel operator and the observer provider conclude that the observer deployment is not feasible, according to the enabling guidelines in Annex A and in consultation with the Secretariat, Panama will report the conclusion to the Secretariat.

CMM 2015-02 [South Pacific Albacore] Para 4

N/A

CMM 2018-03: Seabirds

N/A