



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE WCPFC RECORD OF FISHING VESSELS

WCPFC-TCC18-2022-RP05

16 September 2022

Paper by the Secretariat

Purpose

1. This paper presents the annual summary of information from the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) and reports on the operation of the RFV for the consideration of TCC18.

Background

2. All vessels flagged to CCMs that have been and are currently authorised to fish in the Convention Area beyond each CCM's area of national jurisdiction are shown on the RFV which was established pursuant to Article 24, paragraphs 4 to 7 of the WCPF Convention¹. The *Conservation and Management Measure on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels and Authorization to Fish* (CMM 2018-06) and the *Standards, Specifications and Procedures for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Record of Fishing Vessels* (RFV SSPs) (CMM 2014-03) regulate how the RFV operates and sets standards for data quality.

3. The Secretariat manages the RFV on behalf of Commission members who maintain the data for each of their flagged vessels. The RFV is publicly available on the WCPFC website: <http://www.wcpfc.int/record-fishing-vessel-database>. A range of summary reports can be created for viewing or printing as pdf files. Users can apply filters for specific reports for example, to identify charter vessels or vessels authorized to tranship on the high seas.³ For the most up-to-date summary statistics, refer to <http://www.wcpfc.int/vessels/charts/types>.

4. The full RFV of active and historical data is periodically updated and is also publicly available⁴ for downloading from the WCPFC website (<https://www.wcpfc.int/vessels>).

¹ As defined in Convention Article 1(d) states “fishing” means: (i) searching for, catching, taking or harvesting fish; (ii) attempting to search for, catch, take or harvest fish; (iii) engaging in any other activity which can reasonably be expected to result in the locating, catching, taking or harvesting of fish for any purpose; (iv) placing, searching for or recovering fish aggregating devices or associated electronic equipment such as radio beacons; (v) any operations at sea directly in support of, or in preparation for, any activity described in subparagraphs (i) to (iv), including transshipment; (vi) use of any other vessel, vehicle, aircraft or hovercraft, for any activity described in subparagraphs (i) to (v) except for emergencies involving the health and safety of the crew or the safety of a vessel.

³ Flag CCMs RFV updates for charter notifications and high seas transshipment authorisations are to be treated as public domain data (WCPFC11 Summary Report para 500) and has been publicly available on the RFV website since 2015

⁴ In accord with decisions of WCPFC14 (WCPFC Summary Report paragraph 428) and the data rules and procedures.

5. This report provides the annual summary of information on the RFV and on its operation using the following structure:

- Key points from the RFV annual report;
- Summary of annual information in the RFV
 - *Breakdown of vessels authorised on the RFV*
 - *Completeness of RFV data fields*
- Overview of vessel activity authorised on the RFV
 - *Vessels authorised to tranship*
 - *COVID-19 Intersessional decisions relating to at sea transhipment for purse seine vessels*
 - *Vessels under charter*
 - *CCM charter notifications and recording charters on the RFV*
- Reporting under the RFV:
 - *Fish did not fish reporting;*
 - *A review of RFV implementation under the Compliance Monitoring Scheme*
- An Overview of the Type and Outcomes of Vessel related Cases on the Compliance Case File System
- Secretariat comment on RFV related processes

KEY POINTS FROM THE RFV ANNUAL REPORT

Vessels in the vessel database	
Year	Active
2008	6
2009	8314
2010	6215
2011	5987
2012	5903
2013	5935
2014	6080
2015	5700
2016	4660
2017	4547
2018	3978
2019	3904
2020	3481
2021	3389
2022	3339

As at 14th September 2022

- Of the 3,389 vessels on the RFV for 2021, 62% are longliners, 14% purse seiners and 12% fish carriers. Proportions of the main vessel types remain similar between 2014-2021.
- The number of active vessels on the RFV continues to decline.
- In 2021, 62% of vessels were listed as authorised for high seas transshipment; mainly longliners (85%), carriers/bunkering vessels (9 %) and 3% pole and line. These figures have remained stable over 2021 and 2020.
- In 2021, of the 489 charters, 6 have authorisation periods that ended before 2021, 168 have an authorisation period beginning in 2021 and 79 have an authorisation period beginning in 2022. Authorisation periods for the remaining vessels began prior to 2021 and extend beyond 2022
- There has been an improvement in the numbers of charters where both flag state and chartering state have correctly 'reported charters.
- Most CCMS submitted fish/did not fish reports on or before 1 July 2021 with 13 CCMS submitting reports before June which greatly assists the Secretariat's ability to review and work with flag CCMS to resolve any inconsistencies with WCPFC VMS data.
- CCMS interpreted the implementation of COVID-19 related decisions for purse seine transshipment lead to different ways reporting of purse seine transshipment activity on the high seas. This temporary suspension ended on 25 March 2022.
- A more routine review of gaps or out of date information in data fields is needed to ensure the completeness of relevant data fields and to ensure data quality. In addition, the Secretariat is preparing to review and resolve issues in data quality based on the requirements of CMM 2018-06 and the SSPs (data field content and format) in advance of the RFV upgrade and associated data migration in early 2023. The upgrade requires some minor updates to the RFV SSPs to reflect some changes such as new file formats, a new web address and update CMM references.

Summary of annual information in the RFV

Breakdown of vessels authorised on the RFV

6. In the 2021 there were 3389 active vessels listed on the RFV that were authorised by their member flag state to fish in the WCPF Convention Area. **Figure 1** shows the historical list of vessels on the RFV for each year since 2009 through to August 2022⁵.

Vessels in the vessel database	
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As at 14th September 2022

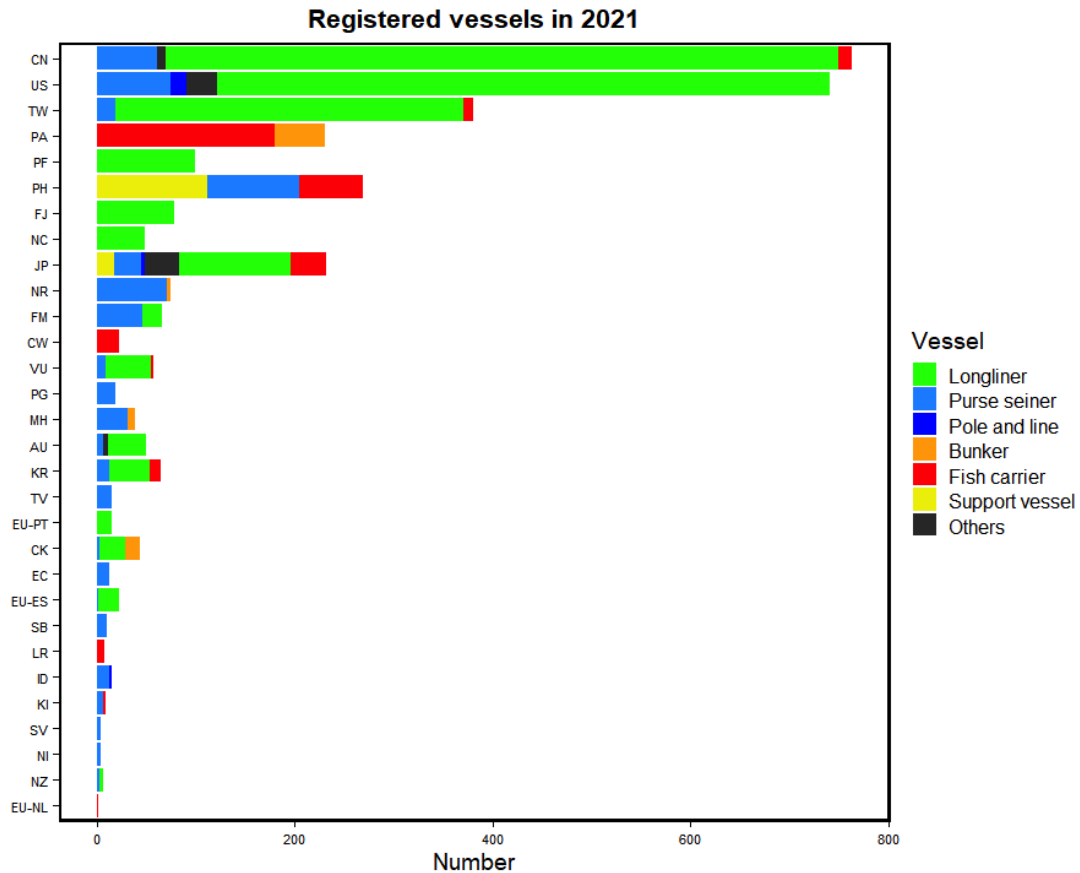
Figure 1: Number of vessels on the RFV 2008-2022⁶

7. Since 2015, the number of vessels listed as ‘active’ on the RFV has progressively reduced with the numbers for the 2021 RY and 2022 (to date) continuing this trend (refer **Figure 1**). The relative proportions of vessel types in 2021 remains similar to recent years with longliners continuing to make up the majority of vessels (62%) followed by purse seiners (14%) and fish carriers (12%) (refer **Figure 2** below).

8. CMM 2018-06 paragraph 6 requires CCMs to provide information for each vessel they enter into the RFV. **Figure 2** below shows a snapshot of vessel types including for each CCM. Vessels from three flag states (China, Japan and Chinese Taipei) continue to represent the majority of vessels authorised to operate in the Convention Area in 2021 at 57% which is slightly less than but similar to previous years.

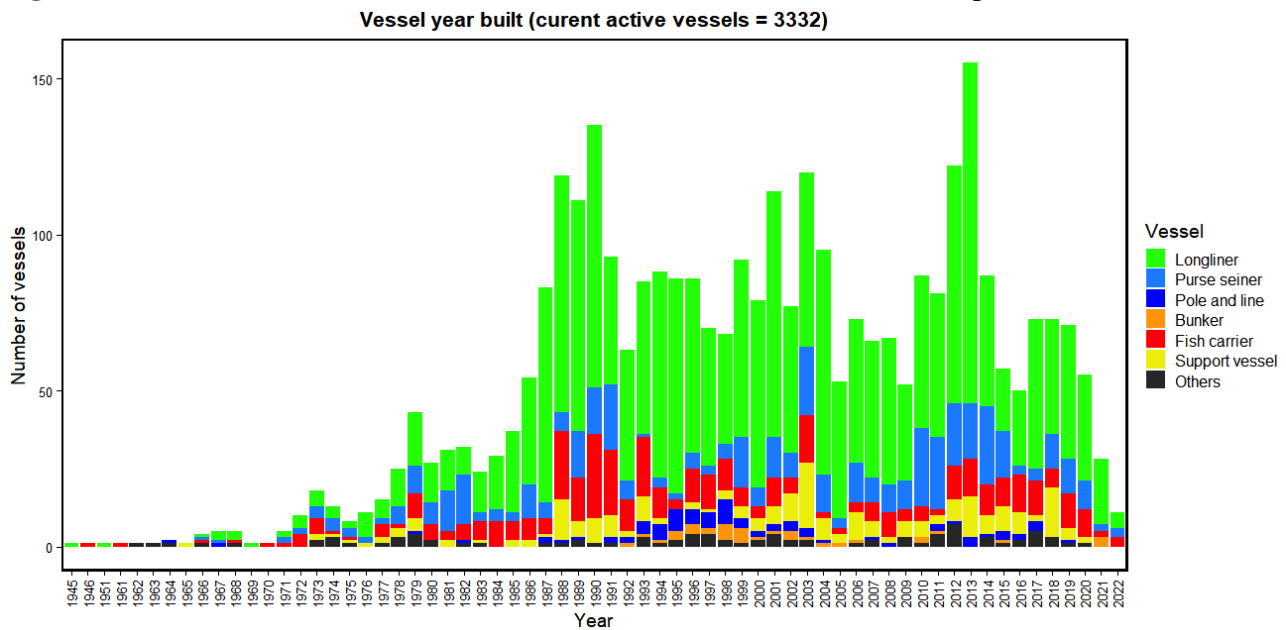
⁶ The numbers shown for any one year represent vessels listed at a single point in time. Data taken at other times may vary given flag state activity to manage their vessels as well as when data quality reviews have resulted in changes.

Figure 2: RFV snapshot of active vessels by Flag State and Vessel Type



9. Information provided by members in updates to the RFV on newly authorised vessels indicates the majority were built within the last 30 years with 50 – 100 vessels recorded as newly built in most years between around 1986 and 2020 (refer **Figure 3** below).

Figure 3: Year built for vessels on the RFV 1945 to 2022 where the data is provided



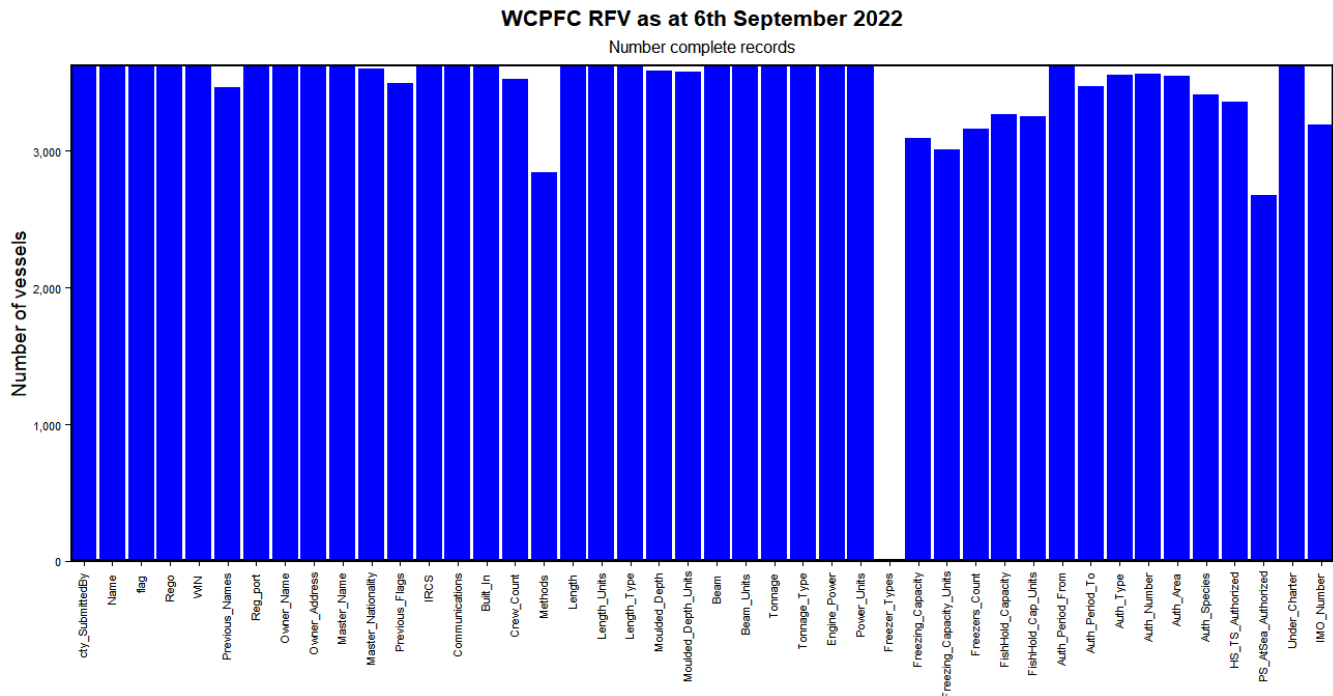
10. The RFV SSPs require the ‘year built’ data field to reflect the ‘Year in which the vessel was built, as indicated on flag State registration or other appropriate documentation’. The Secretariat notes anecdotal information indicates some data on ‘year built’ reflects the year a vessel was reflagged or had a significant refit rather than the year it was first constructed. This is an area for Secretariat data quality review to ensure historical linking of any vessels that are or have been authorised for fishing in the Convention Area. This information is also used to support reviews of potential changes in effort by members as part of annual reporting and the Compliance Monitoring Review process each year.

Completeness of RFV data fields

11. Information on the RFV must be complete and meet the structure and format specifications of Attachment 1. When a new vessel is included on the RFV, or when a vessel's status is changed to ‘active’, the Secretariat will review information provided by members against the RFV SSP “minimum data requirements” and the associated standards and specifications.

12. The required information, as well as a current evaluation of the completeness of the RFV fields by CCM, can be viewed by CCMs on the secure CCM-pages of the website. A summary table is shown in **Figure 4** below.

Figure 4: Data fields on the RFV and the level of completeness



13. The RFV SSPs guidance on fields clearly envisages some data fields, including those that are identified as minimum standards, may be blank in certain circumstances for example, authorisation periods for vessels that do not fish beyond waters of national jurisdiction or for vessels that do not have freezer capacity. For this reason, 100% completion of all fields is not anticipated.

14. However, it should be noted that the RFV SSPs (CMM 2014-03 Footnote 3) clarifies that although vessels with only the minimum required data will be added to and maintained on the RFV, responsible CCMs are still required to meet all obligations to provide all the data required under the WCPFC’s applicable conservation and management measures.

15. The implementation of the RFV SSPs and the reviews of RFV data completeness through the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, have continued to allow streamlining that has improved the operation of the RFV and its completeness.

16. Despite this, gaps in data fields remain and information becomes out of date for example, vessel authorisation periods expire, no information is provided on authorised species or area, on whether a vessel (other than purse seine) has authority to tranship on the high seas of the convention area and no IMO number is provided in some instances for those vessels that meet the requirements which took effect on 1 January 2016 and on 1 April 2020⁷.

⁷ WCPFC15 the Commission agreed to expand the requirements for IMO numbers. Effective 1 January 2016, flag CCMs shall ensure that all their fishing vessels that are authorised to be used for fishing in the Convention Area beyond the flag CCM’s area of national jurisdiction and that are at least 100 GT or 100GRT in size have IMO or LR numbers issued to them. Effective 1 April 2020, flag CCMs were to ensure that all their motorized inboard fishing vessels of less than 100 GRT (or 100 GRT) down to a size of 12 meters in length overall (LOA), authorized to be used for fishing in the Convention Area beyond the flag CCM’s area of national jurisdiction, have an IMO or LR issued (CMM 2018-06 footnote 4). (CMM 2018-06 footnote 4).

17. To improve the quality (including completeness) of data held on the RFV, the Secretariat will assist CCMs with regular information on ongoing gaps and out of date data fields. In turn, this will assist those members and non-members who use the data for example, when carrying out port entry application reviews and MCS operational activities, reducing the need for ad hoc requests to the Secretariat to clarify vessel information or status.

18. As was noted to TCC17, the IT platform the RFV runs on requires updating (refer n) Article 14(1)(c) Priority tasks with respects to implementation of cooperative MCS & E, TCC Priority project specific tasks, TCC Workplan 2022-2024, **WCPFC-TCC18-2022-IP05** page 9 and WCPFC-TCC17-2021-17 Table 1. D page 5 and paragraph 21 a., page 9. *Preliminary consideration of anticipated forecast of Secretariat work commitments for TCC 2022/2023*). Work is underway to complete the necessary work to migrate the Secretariats Record of Fishing Vessels system from Sharepoint to the Drupal platform. The Secretariat is preparing to review and resolve issues in data quality based on the requirements of CMM 2018-06 and the SSPs (data field content and format) in advance of the RFV upgrade and associated data migration in early 2023. Members will be contacted later in 2022 to assist as required. Additionally, the RFV system upgrade requires some minor updates to the RFV SSPs to reflect some changes such as new file formats, a new web address and update of CMM references. A paper that presents the Secretariats recommended edits necessary to support the RFV upgrade have been provided to TCC18 for consideration as paper **WCPFC TCC18-2022-21**.

Overview of vessel activity authorised on the RFV

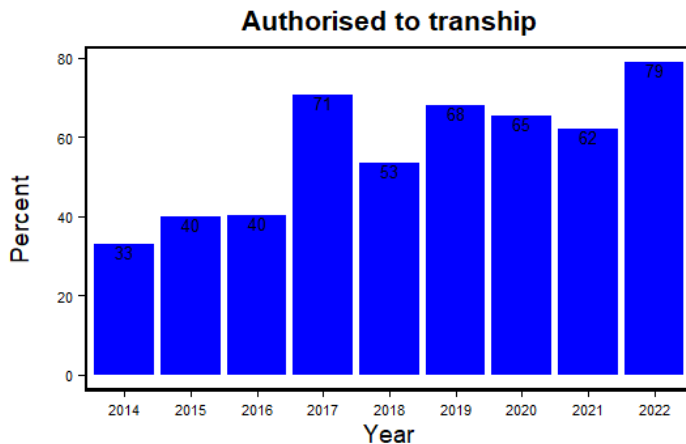
Vessels authorised to tranship

19. The authorization status of vessels is shown on the RFV. High seas transshipment are prohibited for purse seine vessels. For other types of vessels, high seas transshipments are prohibited without an authorisation (CMM 2009-06).

20. In accordance with Attachment 1 of CMM 2014–03, the flag CCM shows the vessel as authorised to tranship where they have made an affirmative determination under paragraph 37 of CMM 2019-06 and accordingly, have authorised the vessel to be used for transshipping highly migratory stocks (HMS) on the high seas in the Convention Area and show a currently valid authorisation.

21. In 2021, 62% of vessels on the RFV were listed as authorised for high seas transshipment (refer **Figure 5** below). Of these, 85% are longliners (81% in 2020), 9 % carriers (9% in 2020) and 3% (pole and line vessels (4% in 2020). The number of vessels authorised for transshipment has declined since 2019.

Figure 5: Percentage of vessels on the RFV that are authorised to tranship



COVID-19 Intersessional decisions relating to at sea transhipment for purse seine vessels

22. COVID-19 intersessional decisions⁸ to temporarily suspend the prohibition on at-sea transhipments for purse seine vessels in paragraph 25 of CMM 2009-06 was in effect between April 2020 and 15 March 2022. This temporary suspension had affected the numbers of purse seine vessels authorised for transhipment although the mechanism for flag states to identify this differed.

23. During 2021, two CCMs notified the Secretariat of the purse seine vessels that were temporarily authorised to tranship at sea. One of these CCMs listed 29 specific vessels that were authorised and updated the RFV accordingly. The other CCM provided a list of 78 individual transhipment events involving purse seiners transhipping at sea during 2021. A third CCM updated the records of 15 purse seine vessel on the RFV to indicate they were authorised to tranship at sea.

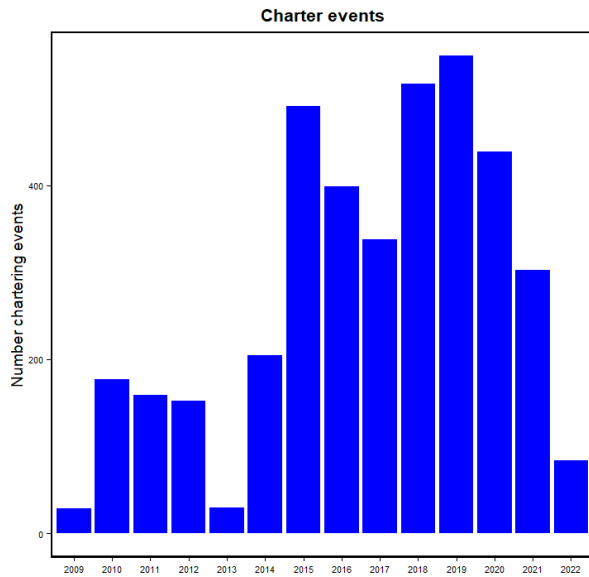
Vessels under charter

24. **Figure 6** below shows the fluctuations in numbers of charters shown on the RFV between 2009 and 2022. Of the vessels on the RFV in 2021, 489 were listed as chartered. The chartered vessels included one non-member bunkering vessel with an authorisation period that expired in October 2021. Of the remaining 488 charters, 6 have authorisation periods that ended in years prior to 2021, 168 have an authorisation period beginning in 2021, and 79 have an authorisation period beginning in 2022. The remaining vessels have authorisation periods that began prior to 2021 and extend beyond 2022. The result is that 344 or 70% of the charter vessels entered on the RFV have an end date of 2022 or beyond.

25. The charter vessels represent 14% of vessels on the RFV in 2022 (up from 9% in 2021) with the main vessel types being longliners (77% up from 67% in 2021), purse seiners 12 % (down from 19% in 2021) and carriers/bunkering vessels 11% (up from 8% in 2021).

⁸ WCPFC-TCC17-2021-14 and WCPFC-TCC16-2020-08

Figure 6: Comparison of the number of charters recorded on the RFV between 2009 to 2022



CCM charter notifications and recording charters on the RFV

26. CCMs are reminded that in accordance with Attachment 1 of CMM 2014-03, the charter information relates to vessels which are notified as chartered under CMM 2021-04 or CMM 2018-06 paragraph 42. This also includes notifications under paragraph 8 and 9 of CMM 2021-01.

27. During 2021, 6 CCMs submitted 21 charter notifications for a total of 321 vessels (320 longliners and 1 purse seiner) to the Secretariat. Of these, the area of application for 35 were “EEZ only” and the rest were “EEZ and HS”. By comparison in 2020, the Secretariat received 23 submissions from 7 CCMs for a total of 389 individual vessels (357 longliners, 32 purse seiners and 2 carriers). To date in 2022, 3 CCMs have submitted 10 charter notifications for 41 vessels (38 longliners and 3 purse seiners), all of which have an area of applications as ‘EEZ and HS’.

28. The Secretariat has noted fewer instances where flag CCMs are entering data into the charter-fields in the RFV for vessels which have **not** been formally notified to the Secretariat as vessels chartered by a chartering CCM under CMM 2019-08 (or its predecessor CMM) and where some formally notified charters are not updated on the RFV by the flag CCM.

29. The Secretariat reminds CCMs that a flag CCM would only update its vessels to ‘chartered’ on the RFV after receipt of advice of the charter notification has been received from the chartering CCM (CMM 2019-08). For simplicity, most chartering states include the flag state authority in the notification of charters to the Secretariat.

30. The Secretariat has been able to help CCMs with personnel interacting with the RFV and other WCPFC online systems to smooth their transition into a new role or to improve familiarity with the systems and their use.

CCM Reporting under the RFV

Figure 7:

Summary of CCM fished/did not fish reports for the 2021 calendar year			
Country name	Did not fish	Fished	Total vessels
Australia	47	7	54
Canada	6	1	7
Cook Islands	4	18	22
China	245	365	610
Curacao	8	1	9
Ecuador	2	5	7
European Union	70	10	80
Fiji	46	23	69
Federated States of Micronesia	1	45	46
Indonesia	27	0	27
Japan	260	499	759
Kiribati	0	13	13
Korea (Republic of)	57	149	206
Liberia	12	0	12
Marshall Islands	0	16	16
New Caledonia	22	0	22
Nicaragua	1	0	1
New Zealand	1	3	4
Panama	80	95	175
French Polynesia	84	0	84
Papua New Guinea	7	13	20
Philippines	62	282	344
Solomon Islands	6	3	9
El Salvador	2	2	4
Thailand	5	0	5
Tonga	1	0	1
Tuvalu	1	7	8
Chinese Taipei	175	497	672
United States of America	30	180	210
Vanuatu	6	66	72

As at 6th September 2022 which includes CCMs updates provided as part of the dCMR process.

Fished/Did not fished Reporting

31. In support of the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS), CMM 2018-06 paragraph 9 requires each CCM to identify a list of their flagged vessels in the RFV for the preceding calendar year and to indicate whether each vessel fished or did not fish for highly migratory fish stocks in the Convention Area beyond its area of national jurisdiction. This information is to be provided to the Executive Director before 1 July of each year to allow it to be integrated with the RFV and used as an input to⁹:

- the Secretariat’s review of the applicability of certain CMMs;
- support compliance reviews;
- support MCS analyses; and
- is used in preparing the draft CMR¹⁰.

32. On 8 February 2022, the Secretariat again sent relevant CCMs a preformatted Excel spreadsheet template listing their relevant vessels from the RFV. The aim is to simplify CCM completion of their fished/did not fish report in a format that also allows the Secretariat to automatically upload each report into the RFV with no manual data entry needed.

33. Twenty-eight (28) CCMs submitted their reports on or before the due date of 1 July, of which thirteen (13) were provided before June. Two reports (2) were submitted later in July and one (1) CCM has not submitted their report. **Figure 7** summarises 2021 fished/did not fish reporting by CCMs. The Secretariat appreciates the support of CCMs that were able to provide early reports. This allows more time for a review of this data against VMS reports and to resolve any inconsistencies with CCMs, spreading out the flow of work for all over the months well in advance of TCC.

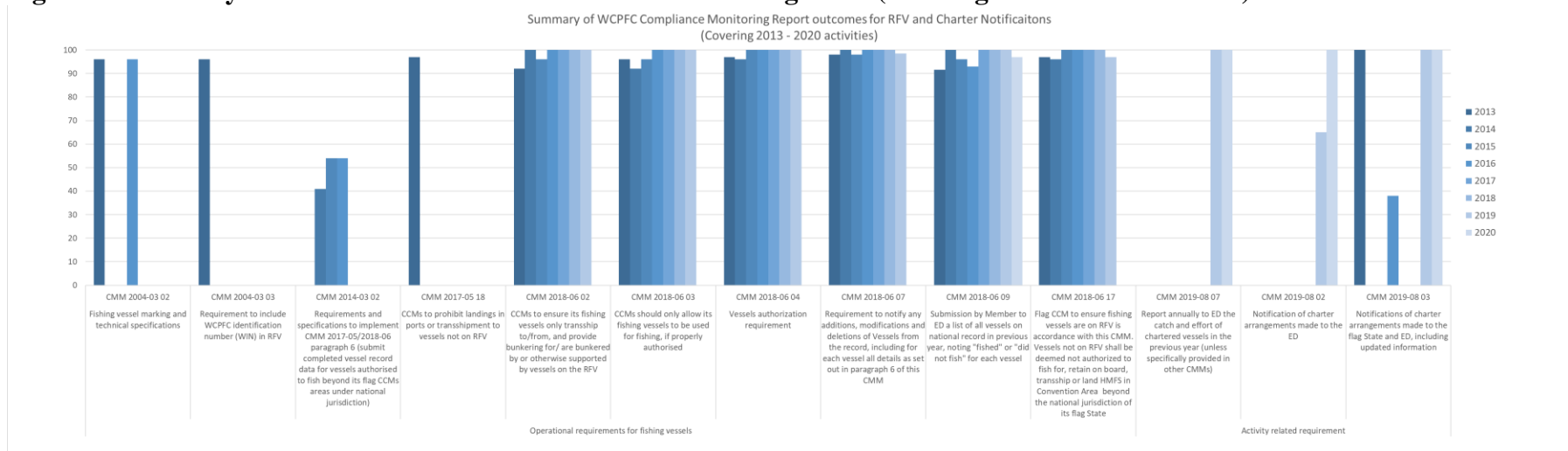
⁹ CMM 2014- 03 paragraph 13

¹⁰ Tasks required by CMM 2019-06 paragraph 22

Review of RFV implementation by applicable CCMs under the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) 2014 – 2021

34. **Figure 9** provides an overview of the result of evaluation of RFV related CMMs¹¹ under the CMS over the years. Implementation of RFV requirements initially posed challenges for CCMs, however, this has steadily improved since 2013. The RFV reporting requirements (CMM 2014-03) was reviewed through the CMS in the earlier years (2014 - 2016 activities), and at that time the outcome was that many CCMs had difficulties to complete all required data fields for each vessel the CCM has entered into the RFV. In more recent years, implementation has been consistently high.

Figure 9. Summary of CMR outcomes for RFV and Charter Obligations (covering 2013 –2020 activities)

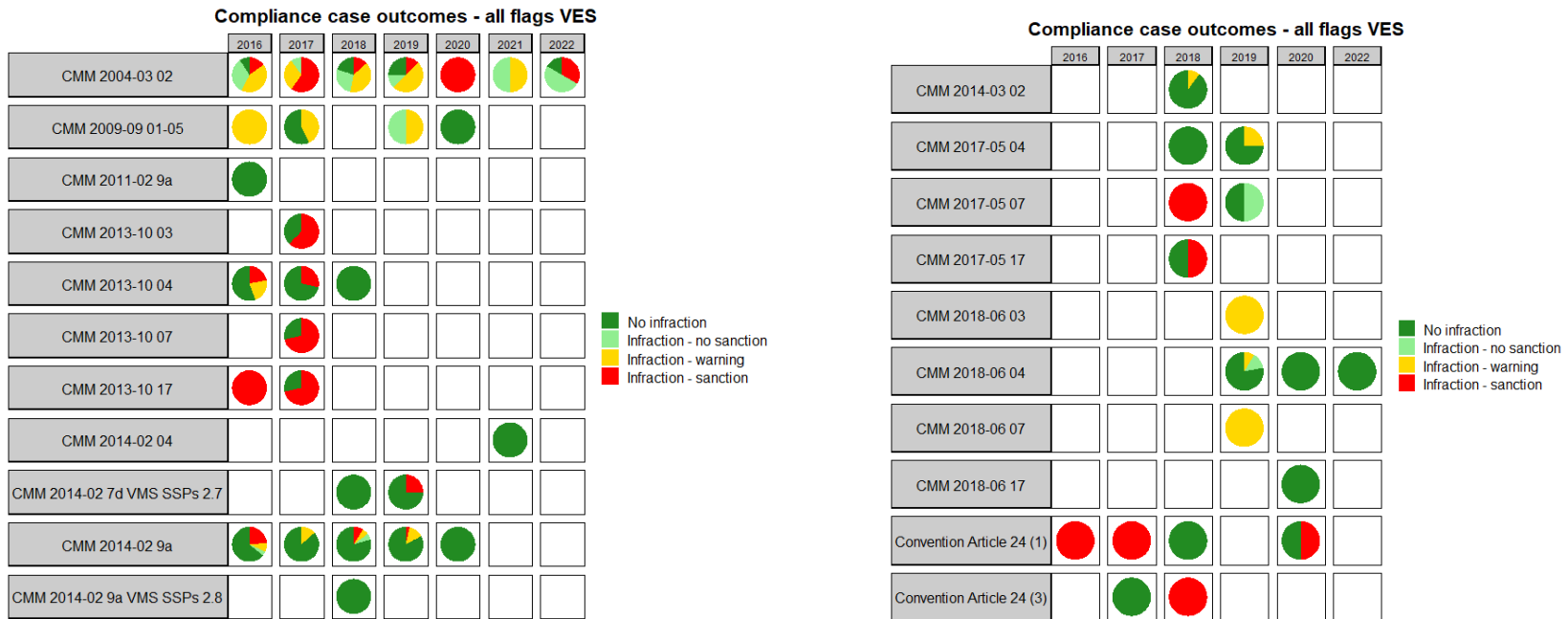


¹¹ CMM 2004-03, CMM 2013-10, CMM 2018-06 and CMM 2014-03

An Overview of the Type and Outcomes of Vessel related Cases on the Compliance Case File System

35. The Compliance Case File System (CCFS) records and tracks progress on investigations of alleged infringements of CMM obligations notified to the Secretariat through reports from the ROP or from CCMs. Cases on the CCFS relating to various obligations relevant to the RFV requirements and the activity of vessels on the RFV. The outcome of all 13, 622 cases are shown in **Figure 10** below.
36. The majority of cases relate to the marking and identification of vessels (CMM 2004-03) and to VMS related reporting (CMM 2014-02). The reduction in VMS related cases denotes a change in the process for handling cases where circumstances mean a vessel has reporting issues to resolve these with CCMs and, where resolution is not able to be achieved, manual reporting is implemented in accord with 2014-02 paragraph 9a.

Figure 10: The outcome of alleged infringements of the vessel related CMM obligations that have been reported to WCPFC



Secretariat comment on RFV related processes

37. The Secretariat:

- is preparing to review and resolve issues in data quality based on the requirements of CMM 2018-06 and the SSPs (data field content and format) in advance of any data migration to the upgraded RFV in the first quarter of 2023. Members will be contacted later in 2022 to assist where this is required¹².
- notes the RFV upgrade requires some minor updates to the RFV SSPs to reflect some changes such as new file formats, a new web address and update CMM references.
- notes that the review of data on the RFV during the review of specifications to shape the development of the RFV upgrade has highlighted areas of process improvement for the Secretariat in maintaining the RFV and working with flag CCM to improve the consistency and quality of data.
- will carry out more routine reviews of data completeness in recognition of the requirement of CMM 2014-03 Footnote 3 that all relevant data fields are to be completed over time once as vessel has been listed with at least the minimum required data.
- notes the need to review data quality of all new and updated changes to vessels on the RFV to ensure records are consistent with the RFV SSPs including Year built, photograph requirements including format, an IMO number has been provided where vessel appears to require this and a vessel is notifying of transshipment is authorised for this activity on the RFV.
- has noted an improvement in the ‘reporting’ of charters by both parties rather than one or the other.
- appreciates the early provision of fish/did not fish reports to assist with processing and the early review of data.

Recommendations

38. TCC18 is invited to consider and note this paper.

¹² n) Article 14(1)(c) Priority tasks with respects to implementation of cooperative MCS & E, TCC Priority project specific tasks, TCC Workplan 2022-2024, WCPFC-TCC18-2022-IP05 pg 9 and WCPFC-TCC17-2021-17 Table 1. D page 5 and paragraph 21 a., page 9. *Preliminary consideration of anticipated forecast of Secretariat work commitments for TCC 2022/2023*