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

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PANAMA

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

AQUATIC RESOURCES AUTHORITY OF PANAMA

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

2022

PART I

INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

Submission: July, 2023

1. Abstract/Summary

The Republic of Panama is located in Central America, an isthmus with coasts in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. 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.

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; 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.

In relation to the commitment to fight against illegal, undeclared, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, 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 and 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.

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.

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. On July 7th, 2022, Panama became the last 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

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

Commission (NPFC) and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) for the period 2022.

Panama has provided its yearly 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.

ANNUAL FISHERIES INFORMATION

2. Tabular Annual Fisheries Information

Our participatory right during 2022 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 2022 were 166 Support Fishing Vessels. All of our vessels were regulated by law and licensed² to operate in the WCPFC in compliance with the recommendations of the Commission 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 fishing vessels in WCPFC Area.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
No. of registered Vessels	96	90	124	84	167	163	173	166
No. of Active Vessels (Fished)	28	74	59	58	87	84	92	90

5. Socio-economic factors

The Panamanian exports from the agricultural, industrial, agroindustrial and fishing sectors, from January to December 2022, totaled B/. 855 million, increasing by 14.8% in FOB value,

² Under Executive Decree No. 131 of 2020

compared to 2021.. 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.

Panama has an important hub of international fish trade, including imports and re-exports of fish products, this activity generates many jobs along with the flag registry, crews, processing plants, as well as the company profits.

The country also exports and reexport significant quantities, of fishery products, due these are the third most important item in the Panamanian foreign market.

Economic Indicators of the General Comptroller of the Republic reflect an increase of 32.5% in Panamanian exports of seafood products according to a comparative of the years 2021 and 2022, encouraging results for this economic activity of the country, specifically the fishing sector.

Thanks to the important investments in aquaculture with new technologies used in intensive farming, the use of artificial intelligence, and training leads us to a historical digit increase in exports at 104.6%.

It is important to highlight that the Fishmeal and Fish Oil industry is something of which this country is proud, being the first certified fishery in Panama and guaranteeing a greater biological and economic benefit, also leaving a closing year 2022 with an increase of 42.4%.

Panama, thanks to the investment of the private sector and its commitment to sustainability, has been gaining access to exclusive and demanding markets, and in this way has managed to position the product at a better price.

With these results Panama continues to gain in terms of export of its seafood products and in this sense the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) will remain vigilant to ensure compliance with Fisheries Law No. 204 of March 18, 2021, so that things are done in the right way with a responsible and sustainable fishing.**6. Disposal of Catch**

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

7. Onshore Developments

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

8. Future Prospect of the Fishery

Panama timely applied for the renewal CNM status before the Commission in order to maintain our participatory rights in the future with support fishing vessels.

9. Status of the Tuna Fishery data collection systems

Fish Carriers and Bunker vessels are required to submit data on their area operations based on the Commission formats and channels for such reporting which include a detailed fishing vessels transshipment and supplying and submitted for verification, submitting the necessary information in support of the fisheries, research and statistic and the scientific data bases for the sustainable management of the resources.

10. Research Activities Covering Target and non-Target species

Panama reports its statistics data and reports on all transshipment, offloading and supplying activities involving fishery products regulated by the WCPFC in the Convention Area as ports, EEZ and high seas according to the domestic and international measures.

The Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) is responsible for verifying the information of catching, transshipping, transporting, landing, exporting and importing 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	1,377,997.00	6,020,072.00		ALB		
	828,085.00	7,727,007.00		BET		
	3,097,251.00	3,611,999.00		YFT		
	0.00	1,145,588.00		SWO		
	14,352,834.00	2,553,327.00		SKJ		
	0.00	204,867.00		MLS		
	0.00	307,612.00		BUM		
	0.00	4,687,196.20		OTH		
received	264,059.00	4,881,030.00		ALB		
	14,830,362.00	10,244,109.00		BET		
	84,710,586.00	4,062,134.00		YFT		
	6,902.00	1,433,136.00		SWO		
	587,943,348.00	107,020.00		SKJ		
	9,401.00	123,595.00		MLS		
	0.00	363,724.00		BUM		
	26,941.00	1,394,770.00		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) transshipped in port, transshipped at sea in areas of national jurisdiction, and transshipped beyond areas of national jurisdiction	c) transshipped inside the Convention Area and transshipped outside the Convention Area	d) caught inside the Convention Area and caught outside the Convention Area	e) fishing gear
offloaded	9	24		
received	976	389		

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

N/A

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

Note: Additional information about these CMMs have been submitted through the CMR platform.

CMM 2019-04 CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR SHARKS

Annex 2

The Republic of Panama as a Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), its right of participation is only limited to vessels engaged in fishing related activities (fishing support vessels) such as fish carrier vessels for the transshipment of fishery products, and tankers for the transfer of fuel, therefore, it has no participation with catching vessels within the area regulated by the convention.

However, Panama has adopted domestic regulations for the FAO National Plan of Action for the conservation and management of shark and ray fisheries, as well as regulations prohibiting shark finning.

Likewise, Panama adopted according to resolution ADM/ARAP No.052 of October 05, 2021 the Conservation and Management Measures in force of the WCPFC Fisheries Commission, and in which the CMM 2019-04 is listed and in its article 3 establishes that any measure adopted by the WCPFC in the future, that modifies or replaces any of the measures adopted by the WCPFC in the future, that modifies or replaces any of the measures adopted by the WCPFC in the future, that modifies or replaces any of the measures adopted by the WCPFC in the future.

Brief description of the domestic legislation of Panama, which adopts the aforementioned topics:

1. The Republic of Panama adopts through Resolution ADM/ARAP No.014 of May 07, 2018, the National Action Plan for the Conservation and Management of Shark and Ray Fisheries in Panama - 2017, with the objective of protecting and guaranteeing the long-term sustainable use of these resources. It is established that the provisions contained in the Action Plan are applicable to any vessel that carries out directed or incidental fishing activities of shark resources, or incidental fishing of the ray resource.

The National Plan of Action (NPOA) responds to the warning call in which shark populations are found at the national level, due to a lack of management that allows responsible fishing activities and how long it takes for the populations that are being exploited to recover, from which the rays do not escape.

This NPOA update aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of shark and ray populations through five objectives:

- 1) To promote and facilitate the processes for the development of knowledge, research and monitoring of sharks and rays, their critical habitats and their fishery, involving technical personnel from the State and those present in academic and non-governmental organizations and from the productive sector itself, in order to achieve the conservation and adequate management of the resource, its critical habitats and fishery;

- 2) Strengthen the regulatory, management and administration capacity to guarantee the sustainable use and/or conservation of sharks and rays in Panama and their critical habitats;
 - 3) To have a control and surveillance program aimed at guaranteeing compliance with existing norms and regulations in order to reduce illegality;
 - 4) To ensure that information on initiatives for the conservation and sustainable use of sharks and rays reaches the general population, with emphasis on the governmental and fishing sectors, through coordinated inter-institutional work and with the support of various sectors of society;
 - 5) Achieve the necessary financing and institutional strengthening for the implementation of NPOA Sharks and Rays projects and activities.
2. With respect to item 4 of Annex 2: Template for reporting on the implementation of the CMM 2019-04, The Republic of Panama complies with paragraph 8 of the CMM, adopting through Law No. 9 of March 16, 2006, prohibits the practice of shark finning in the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama and dictates other provisions.

This Law prohibits the practice of shark finning in the jurisdictional waters of Panama, which aims to increase the resource through its protection and sustainable use, avoiding the practice of cutting off the shark's fins and throwing the body back into the sea without using it.