



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
Nineteenth Regular Session
20-26 September 2023
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE WCPFC RECORD OF FISHING VESSELS

WCPFC-TCC19-2023-RP05
9 September 2023

Prepared by the WCPFC Secretariat

Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| 1 Purpose | 1 |
| 2 Introduction | 1 |
| 3 Upgrades to the RFV | 1 |
| 3.1 Mobile RFV | 2 |
| 4 Summary of information in the RFV | 2 |
| 4.1 Breakdown of vessels that are RFV listed | 2 |
| 4.2 Completeness of RFV data fields | 2 |
| 5 Overview of vessel activity authorised on the RFV | 3 |
| 5.1 Vessels authorised to transship | 3 |
| 5.2 Vessels under charter | 3 |
| 5.2.1 Trends in chartering | 3 |
| 6 CCM Reporting under the RFV | 3 |
| 6.1 Fished/Did not fish Reporting | 3 |
| 6.2 Review of RFV implementation by applicable CCMs under the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) 2014 - 2021 | 4 |
| 7 An Overview of the Type and Outcomes of Vessel related Cases on the Compliance Case File System | 4 |
| 8 Recommendations | 4 |
| Tables | 5 |
| Figures | 8 |

1 Purpose

This paper summarises information from the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) and reports on the operation of the RFV.

2 Introduction

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.

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. Commission members are required to maintain the currency and completeness of the data for each of their flagged vessels. A vessel that shows as RFV Listed is currently active and therefore, is authorised to fish in the Convention Area. A deleted vessel will show as Not Currently RFV Listed if it has been deleted and therefore, is no longer authorised to fish in the Convention Area.

The RFV is publicly available on the WCPFC website: <https://vessels.wcpfc.int/>¹. A range of summary statistics and data filters are available.

3 Upgrades to the RFV

A significant upgrade of the RFV was initiated in 2022. A "Training" version of the upgraded RFV was released on 21 March 2023 to allow CCMs to use the new functions and become familiar with the new format. This site remains available. The upgraded RFV went live for CCMs and the public, on 3 April.

This system meets all the requirements for the RFV but has some added functions and features designed to enhance CCMs ability to manage their vessel records in a way that more efficiently reflects their needs.

New features include:

- individual login access rather than use of the generic country login (refer to WCPFC-TCC19-2023-RP08 for more detail);
- RFV Listed and Not Currently RFV Listed vessels and the history for each vessel irrespective of status;
- the ability for flag State and host CCMs to enter charter information and to view the charter history for a vessel;
- the ability for CCMs to complete online registration of MTUs, and to request that the Secretariat activate and deactivate MTUs associated with a vessel;
- the ability to submit Annual Report Part 2 reporting of fished/not fished status and MTU Audit inspections online; and
- a dashboard that highlights key information on a CCMs vessel and MTU statuses including notification of expired or soon to expire authorisation periods and where a flag or host CCM has actions required to complete the notification of a charter on the RFV.

These upgrades have allowed the Secretariat to focus more on monitoring data quality and supporting CCMs in understanding and completing RFV processes. The Secretariat has provided familiarisations on the new RFV online interface with most CCMs and continues to assist where there are changes in personnel and where refresher sessions are requested. This work will continue on request or where the Secretariat identifies additional support may be helpful.

Further refinements to the RFV are intended based on CCM feedback which may include suggestions on additional summary statistics and CCM dashboards. Work will also continue on providing additional administrative tools that support Secretariat functions and data quality checks such as the identification of data gaps and errors, and reporting to the Commission.

¹In accordance with decisions of WCPFC14 (WCPFC Summary Report paragraph 428) and the data rules and procedures.

3.1 Mobile RFV

Funding by the USA has allowed the development of a mobile friendly version of the RFV that allows the RFV to be installed on some mobile devices. Once downloaded, the RFV is available without internet access to show those vessels that are “RFV Listed” and therefore active at the time of the download. The RFV will update again once an internet connection is available. Instructions on installing the RFV can be found on the WCPFC support webpage

It is anticipated that this will be particularly useful for those staff involved in routine inspections and MCS operational activities in the field particularly where internet connections are limited.

4 Summary of information in the RFV

4.1 Breakdown of vessels that are RFV listed

The number of vessels that were RFV listed and therefore authorised to fish, peaked at 8,314 in 2009. Since 2014, this number has progressively reduced from 6,080 to 3,311 in 2022 and 3,252 in 2023 (Table 1). Since 2015, the number of vessels listed as “active” on the RFV has progressively reduced with the numbers for 2021 and 2022 continuing this trend (Table 1). The relative proportions of vessel types in 2022 remains similar to recent years with the majority of RFV vessels classified as longliners (62%) followed by purse seiners (14%) and fish carriers (12%) (Figure 1).

Vessels from China, Japan and Chinese Taipei continue to represent the majority of vessels authorised to operate in the Convention Area in 2022 at 56% which is similar to previous years.

Flag State information shows the majority of RFV Listed vessels were built within the last 35 years however, anecdotal information from some CCMs indicates some data reflects the date of re-flagging or of a significant refit rather than the year first constructed³ (Figure 2). The linking of vessel history assists to reduce the problem however, checks for new vessels or “relisted” vessels will be required to ensure more consistent data reflecting when the vessel was first constructed. The relevant RFV SSPs could be more specific in the description of the required data for this field and the RFV online support information will be updated to reflect this. Improving the quality of this data in the future is important as it is one source of information that supports reviews of potential changes in effort by CCMs as part of the annual Compliance Monitoring Review process each year.

4.2 Completeness of RFV data fields

An evaluation of the completeness of the RFV fields by CCM is shown in Figure 3.

When a new vessel is added to the RFV, or when a vessel's status is changed to “RFV listed”, the Secretariat will review information provided by CCMs against the RFV SSP “minimum data requirements” and the associated standards and specifications.

Some data fields 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.

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 must provide all the data required under the WCPFC's applicable conservation and management measures.

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 and/or area, on whether a vessel (other than purse seine) has authority to transship 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 2020⁴.

²<https://wcpfc.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/51000065425>

³The 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”.

⁴WCPFC15 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

To improve data quality on the RFV, including completeness, the Secretariat will periodically review and follow-up on missing or incomplete data fields with CCMs. This will assist those CCMs and non-CCMs 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. There are a number of queries and concerns from CCMs about the number of vessels found to be active with expired authorisation periods particularly when undertaking high seas boardings and inspection or surveillance activities.

5 Overview of vessel activity authorised on the RFV

5.1 Vessels authorised to transship

The authorization status of vessels is shown on the RFV. High seas transshipments are prohibited for purse seine vessels. For other types of vessels, high seas transshipments are prohibited unless specifically authorised to do so by the flag State and where the vessel has an active status of RFV Listed (Figure 4).

Figure 4 shows the number and percentage of vessels authorised for high seas transshipments. The figures for those vessel types that are authorised remained relatively stable over the last three years averaging 83% longliners, 9% carriers and 3% pole and line vessels.

5.2 Vessels under charter

As reported in Section 3 of this paper, both flag CCM and host CCM provide their notification of a charter directly into the upgraded RFV. The RFV provides an automated notification indicating when one of the parties has added the information and noting pending action is required by the other party. This process automates the process for CCMs engaged in charter arrangements to submit their required notifications to the Commission. The numbers of charters since 1997 are shown in Figure 5, and Figure 6 provides information on the CCMs involved in chartering.

5.2 Trends in chartering

Overall, charters have increased since 2014 (Figure 5). Prior to 2016, most charters were to the Solomon Islands. From 2015, a high number of charters are to Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Marianas, the Federated States of Micronesia and Kiribati (Figure 5). All charters to US territories are from USA flagged vessels, whereas most charters to Pacific Island states are from China and Chinese Taipei (Figure 6). Most charters are from longline vessels (Table 2).

More detailed change in flag State is shown by fishing vessel flag and vessel type in Figure 7 to Figure 11. In 2022, most charters were vessels flagged to China and Chinese Taipei that were chartered to the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and the Solomon Islands. The majority of these were longline vessels (Figure 7). Vessels flagged to China had a similar trend in 2021, but 2021 saw a large number of longline vessels flagged to the USA chartering to the Northern Marianas (Figure 8). The trends for the USA were different in 2020 where charters were split almost evenly between American Samoa and the Northern Marianas (Figure 9). These trends were consistent in 2018 and 2019 with the largest difference being a higher proportion of vessels flagged to Chinese Taipei chartering to the Solomon Islands and Palau (Figure 10 and Figure 11).

6 CCM Reporting under the RFV

6.1 Fished/Did not fish Reporting

As part of annual reporting, each CCM must identify whether each of their active vessels on the RFV in the preceding year fished or did not fish in the Convention Area in that year. This information is used:

- to support the Secretariat's review of the applicability of certain CMMs;
- to support compliance reviews;
- to support MCS analyses; and

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).

- in preparing the Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR).

Only two CCMs submitted reports after 1 July 2023. The Secretariat worked with CCMs during April to June 2023, familiarising CCMs with the new RFV interface for submitting these reports and the review process undertaken by the Secretariat to confirm their reporting. This feature will mean that, from 1 January in any one year, CCMs can provide this information directly into the RFV in respect of the flagged vessels they are responsible for. Table 3 summarises 2022 fished/did not fish reporting by CCMs. The Secretariat appreciates the support and feedback from CCMs during this transition. The Secretariat was also able to more easily monitor and progress any reviews of status which have all been resolved.

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

Figure 12 shows the result of evaluation of RFV related CMMs under the CMS over time. Implementation of RFV requirements initially posed challenges for CCMs, however, this has steadily improved since 2013. The RFV reporting requirements (CMM 2014-03) were 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.

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

The Compliance Case File System (CCFS) records and tracks progress on investigations of alleged infringements of CMM obligations notified to the Secretariat through ROP reporting or from CCMs. The outcome of the 13,622 cases relating to RFV requirements and the activity of vessels is shown in Figure 13. Note the references to CMMs include historical versions of the RFV related CMMs.

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 reflects a change in process for vessel reporting issues that reflect CMM 2014-02 9a requirements. The Secretariat resolves these directly with the CCM and cases are no longer created. This will only be the case where a vessel is of RFV Listed status and therefore, active. For vessels that are not on the RFV or are not currently listed as active, cases will be created.

8 Recommendations

TCC19 is invited to note this paper and

1. the ongoing support to familiarise CCMs with the upgraded RFV;
2. the expectation of CCM feedback on the system and possible refinements;
3. the use of the RFV to support annual reporting of fish/did not fish reports from 1 January and MTU Audit inspections
4. the increasing focus on the quality of the data on the RFV and supporting CCMs in achieving this.

Tables

Table 1: Number of vessels on the RFV 2008-2023. 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. Database extract date 9th September 2023.

| Year | Active vessels |
|------|----------------|
| 2008 | 6 |
| 2009 | 8,314 |
| 2010 | 6,215 |
| 2011 | 5,987 |
| 2012 | 5,903 |
| 2013 | 5,935 |
| 2014 | 6,081 |
| 2015 | 5,702 |
| 2016 | 4,664 |
| 2017 | 4,552 |
| 2018 | 3,983 |
| 2019 | 3,912 |
| 2020 | 3,491 |
| 2021 | 3,392 |
| 2022 | 3,308 |
| 2023 | 3,254 |

Table 2: Summary of the vessels notified of being chartered, leased of other mechanisms by CCMs, by gear and by year (CMM 2021-04) (as of 9th September 2023).

| Chartering CCM | Vessel type | Fishing vessel CCM | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|----------------|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| American Samoa | Longliner | United States of America | 140 | 138 | 133 | 0 | 137 | 0 |
| | Others | United States of America | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cook Islands | Longliner | China | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Longliner | Federated States of Micronesia | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fiji | Longliner | China | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Federated States of Micronesia | Longliner | China | 56 | 66 | 59 | 38 | 20 | 18 |
| | Longliner | Chinese Taipei | 5 | 5 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Longliner | Vanuatu | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Purse seiner | Chinese Taipei | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Japan | Fish carrier | Vanuatu | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kiribati | Longliner | China | 4 | 33 | 30 | 34 | 39 | 31 |
| | Longliner | Fiji | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Purse seiner | China | 10 | 14 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 14 |
| | Purse seiner | Nauru | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Korea (Republic of) | Bunker | Panama | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Fish carrier | Panama | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Fish carrier | Vanuatu | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marshall Islands | Longliner | China | 40 | 22 | 13 | 43 | 18 | 21 |
| | Purse seiner | China | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands | Longliner | United States of America | 140 | 139 | 134 | 141 | 135 | 0 |
| | Others | United States of America | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Papua New Guinea | Fish carrier | Philippines | 2 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 8 | 5 |
| | Longliner | China | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Longliner | Chinese Taipei | 6 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Longliner | Vanuatu | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Purse seiner | Papua New Guinea | 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | Purse seiner | Philippines | 3 | 15 | 26 | 29 | 27 | 14 |
| | Support vessel | Philippines | 6 | 9 | 3 | 18 | 17 | 19 |
| Philippines | Support vessel | Philippines | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Palau | Longliner | Chinese Taipei | 41 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Solomon Islands | Fish carrier | Chinese Taipei | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Longliner | China | 11 | 6 | 0 | 11 | 5 | 0 |
| | Longliner | Fiji | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| | Longliner | Chinese Taipei | 54 | 46 | 27 | 27 | 50 | 49 |
| | Longliner | Vanuatu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Purse seiner | Chinese Taipei | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Samoa | Longliner | Cook Islands | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Longliner | Vanuatu | 9 | 10 | 20 | 0 | 10 | 11 |

Table 3: Number of vessels on the RFV in 2022 that CCMs have indicated have fished or not fished. Database extract date 9th September 2023

| CCM | 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 | 57 | 286 | 343 |
| 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 | 28 | 180 | 208 |
| Vanuatu | 6 | 66 | 72 |

Figures

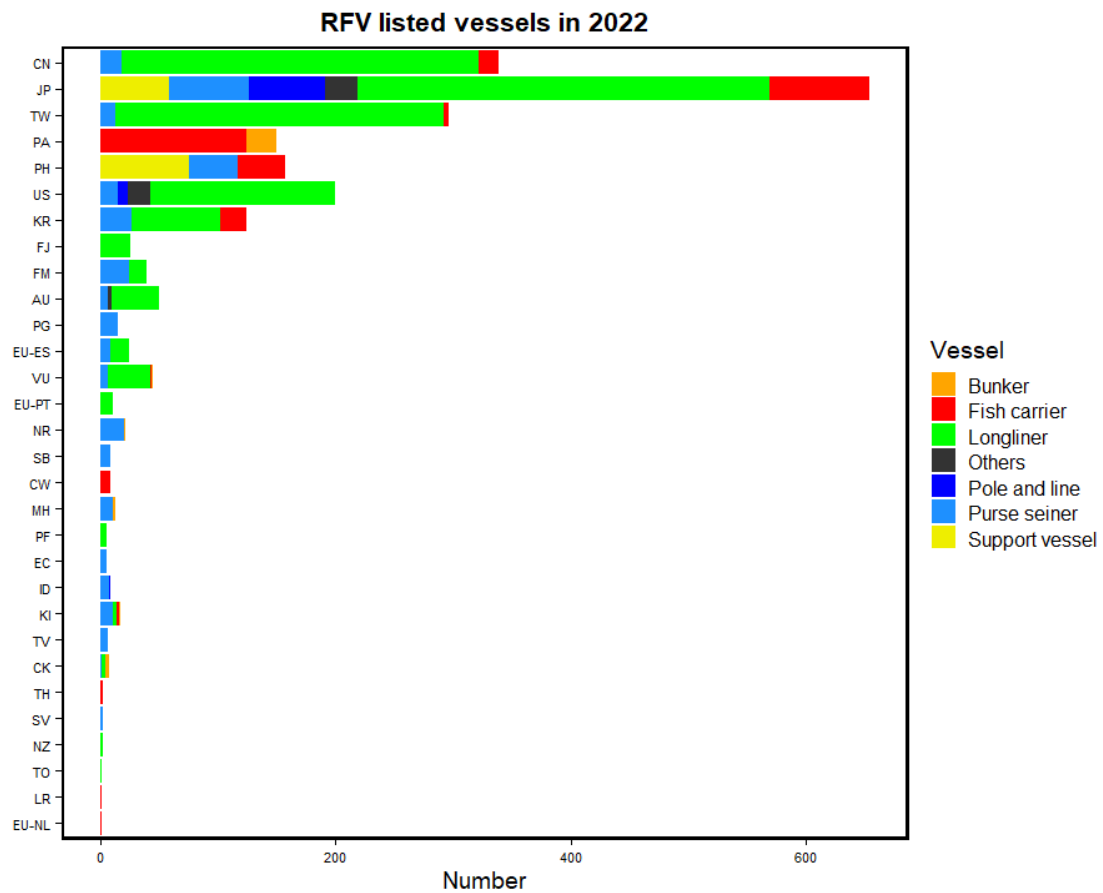


Figure 1: WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels current active vessels by Flag State and Vessel Type (as of 9th September 2023).

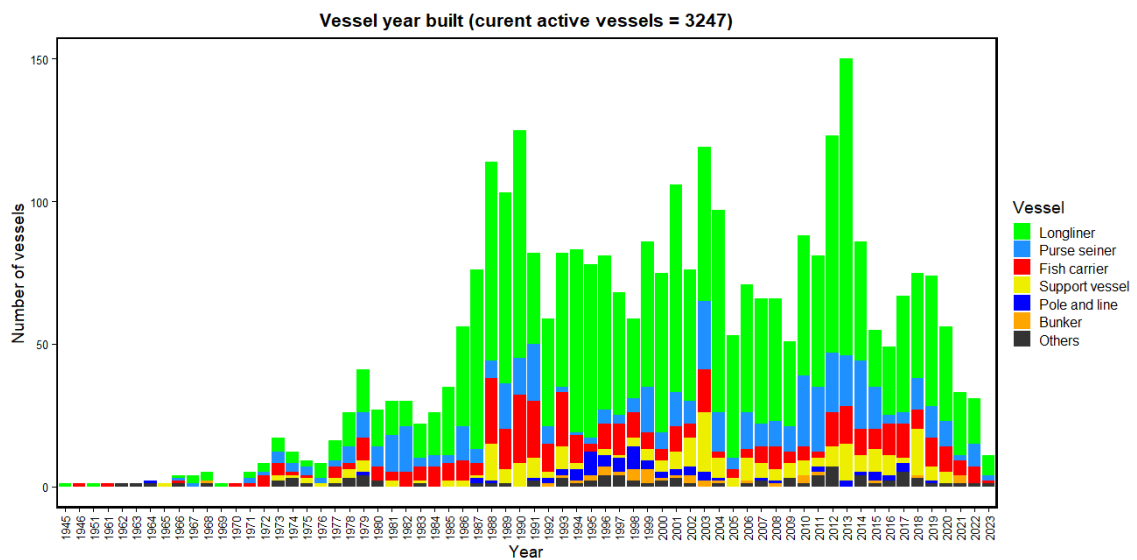


Figure 2: WCPFC year built for vessels on the Record of Fishing Vessels from 1945 to 2023, where the data were provided (as of 9th September 2023).

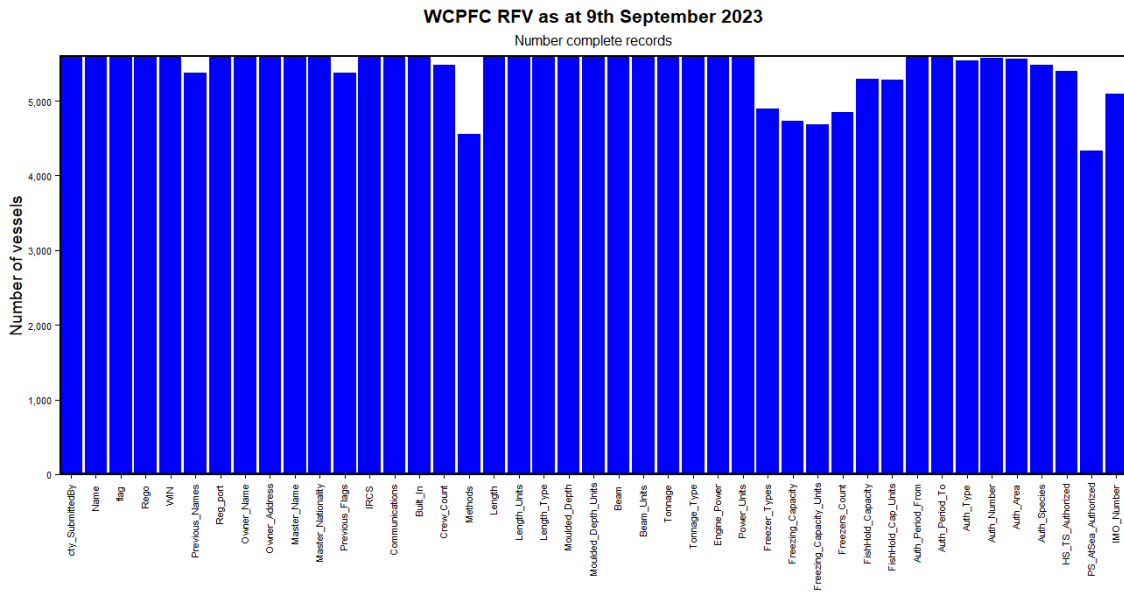


Figure 3: WCPFC data fields on the Record of Fishing Vessels and the level of completeness (as of 9th September 2023).

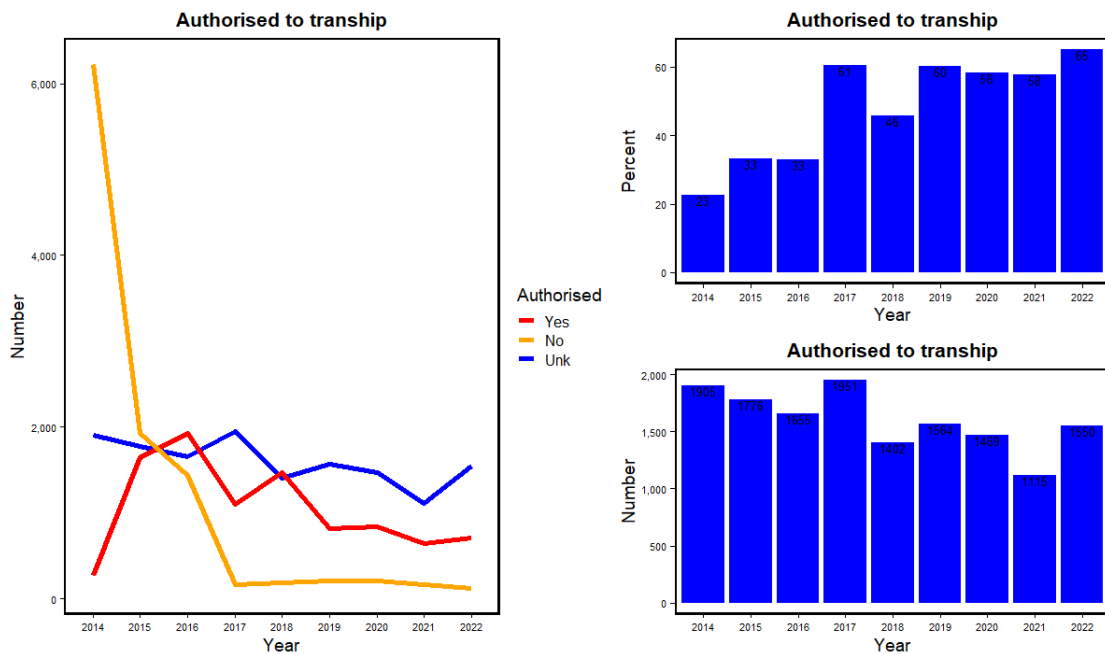


Figure 4: Number and percentage of vessels on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels that are authorised to tranship.

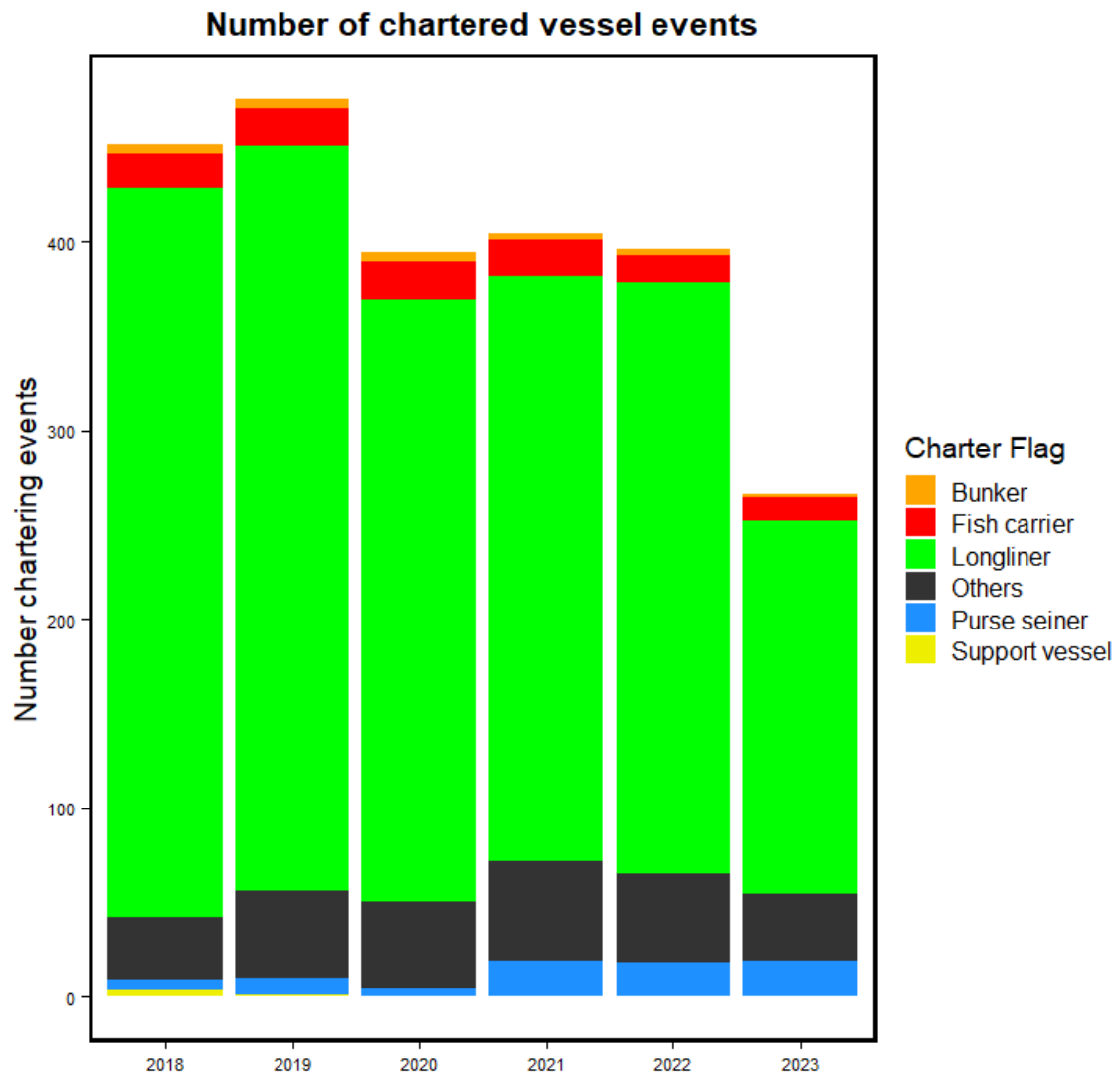


Figure 5: Comparison of the number of chartered vessels recorded on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels between 2009 and 2023.

Charter CCM

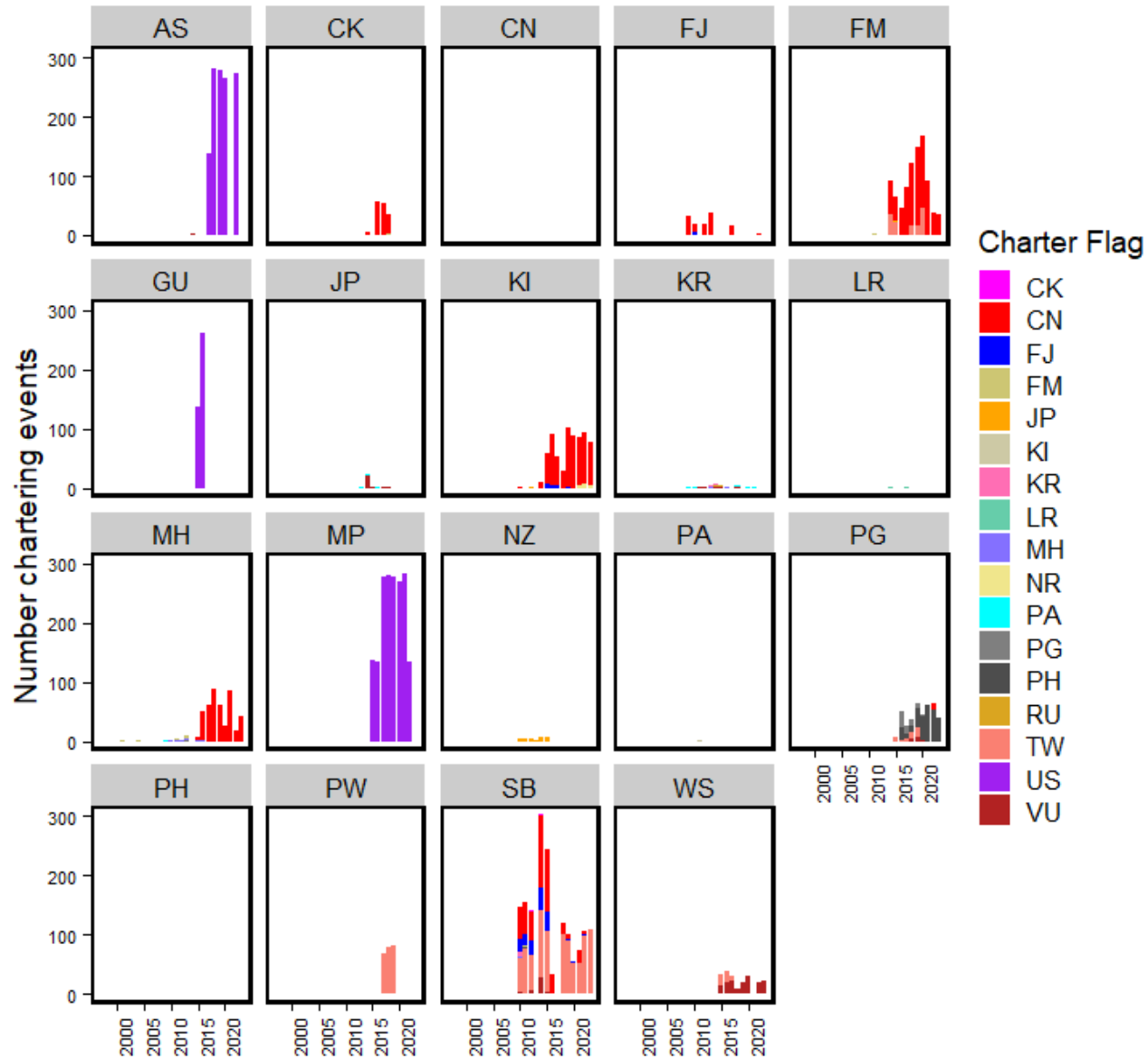


Figure 6: The number of chartering events by year and chartering CCM and charter flag from 2009-2022 within the WCPFC Convention area.

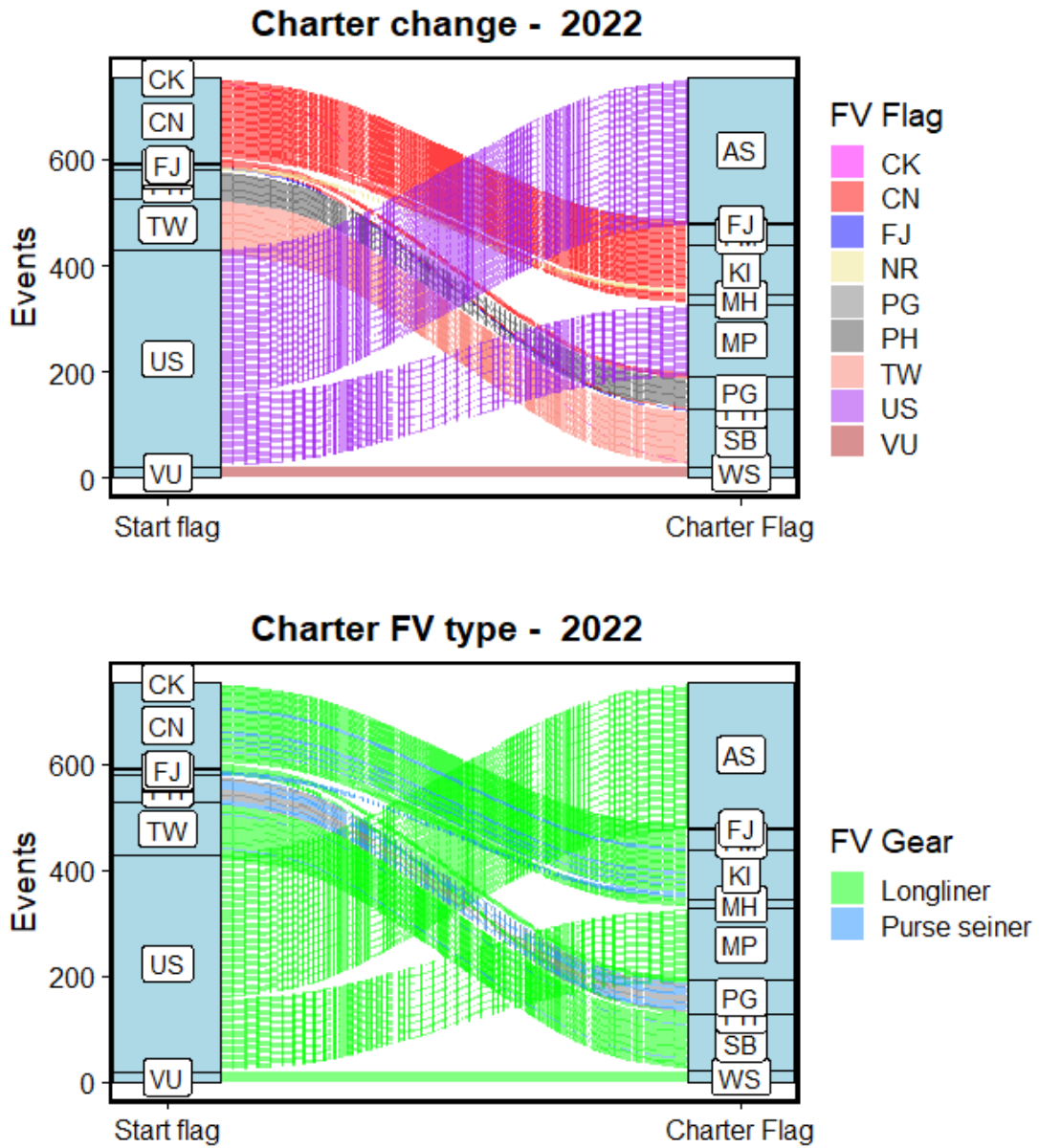


Figure 7: Change in flag through chartering from fishing vessel flag to charter flag (top) and by vessel type (bottom) in 2022.

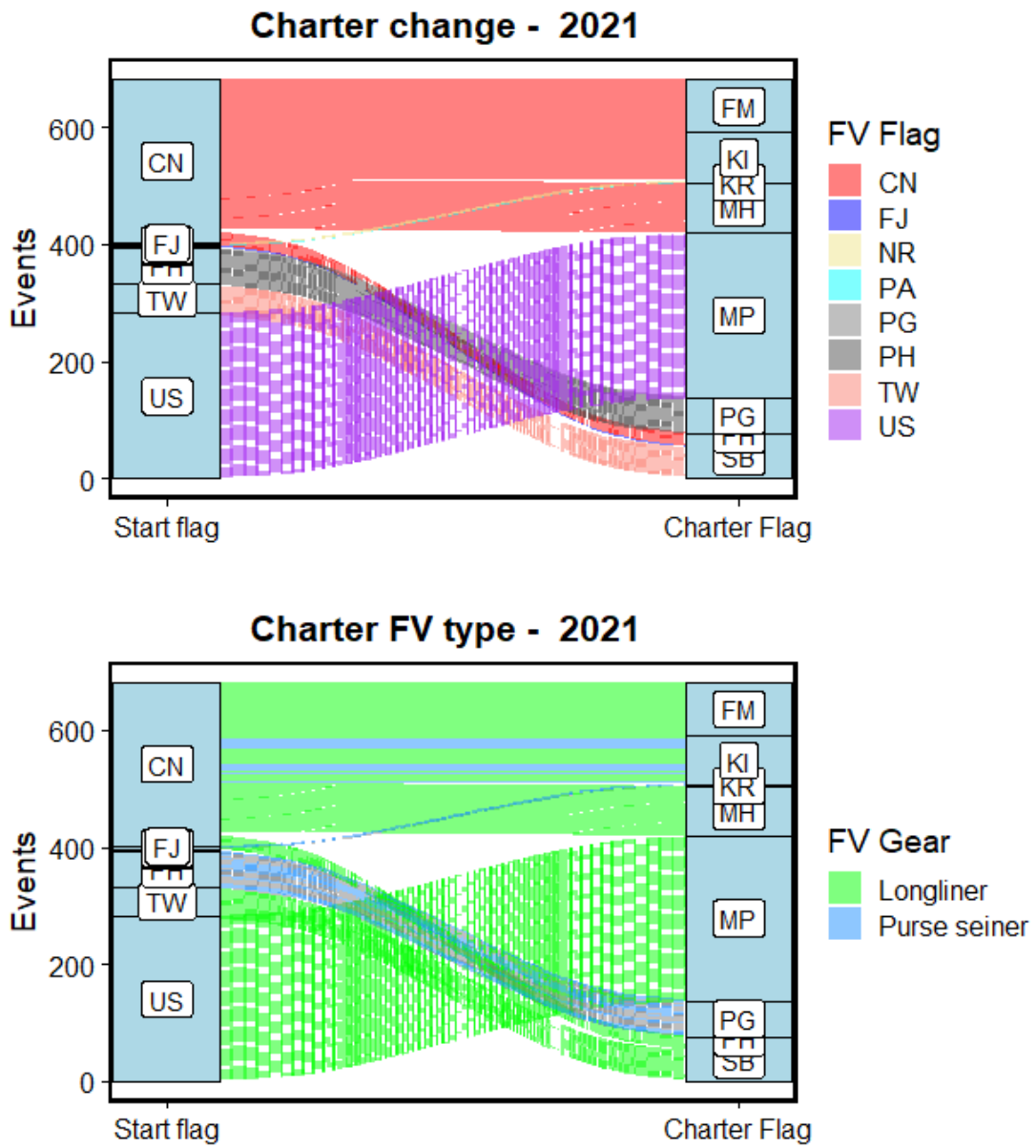


Figure 8: Change in flag through chartering from fishing vessel flag to charter flag (top) and by vessel type (bottom) in 2021.

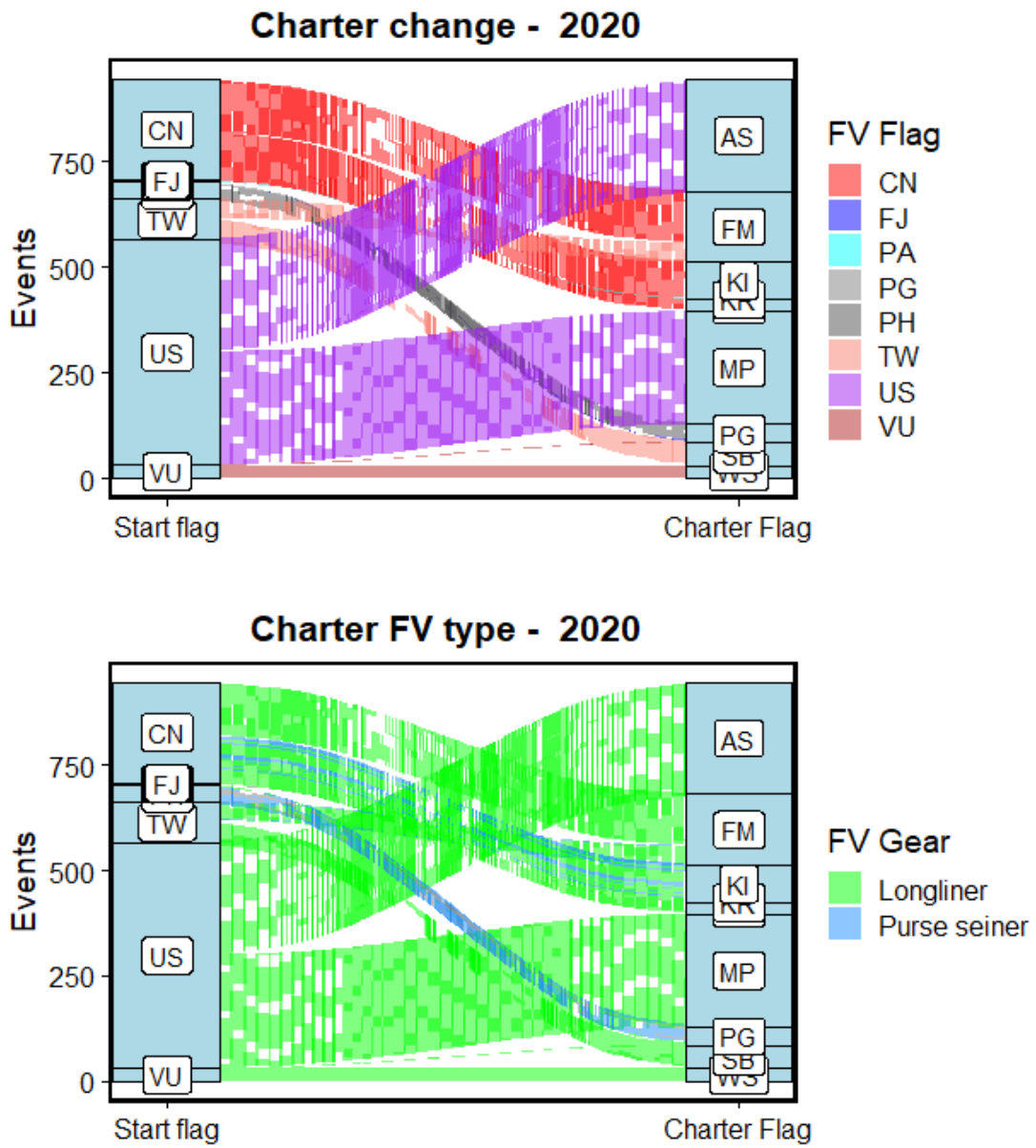


Figure 9: Change in flag through chartering from fishing vessel flag to charter flag (top) and by vessel type (bottom) in 2020.

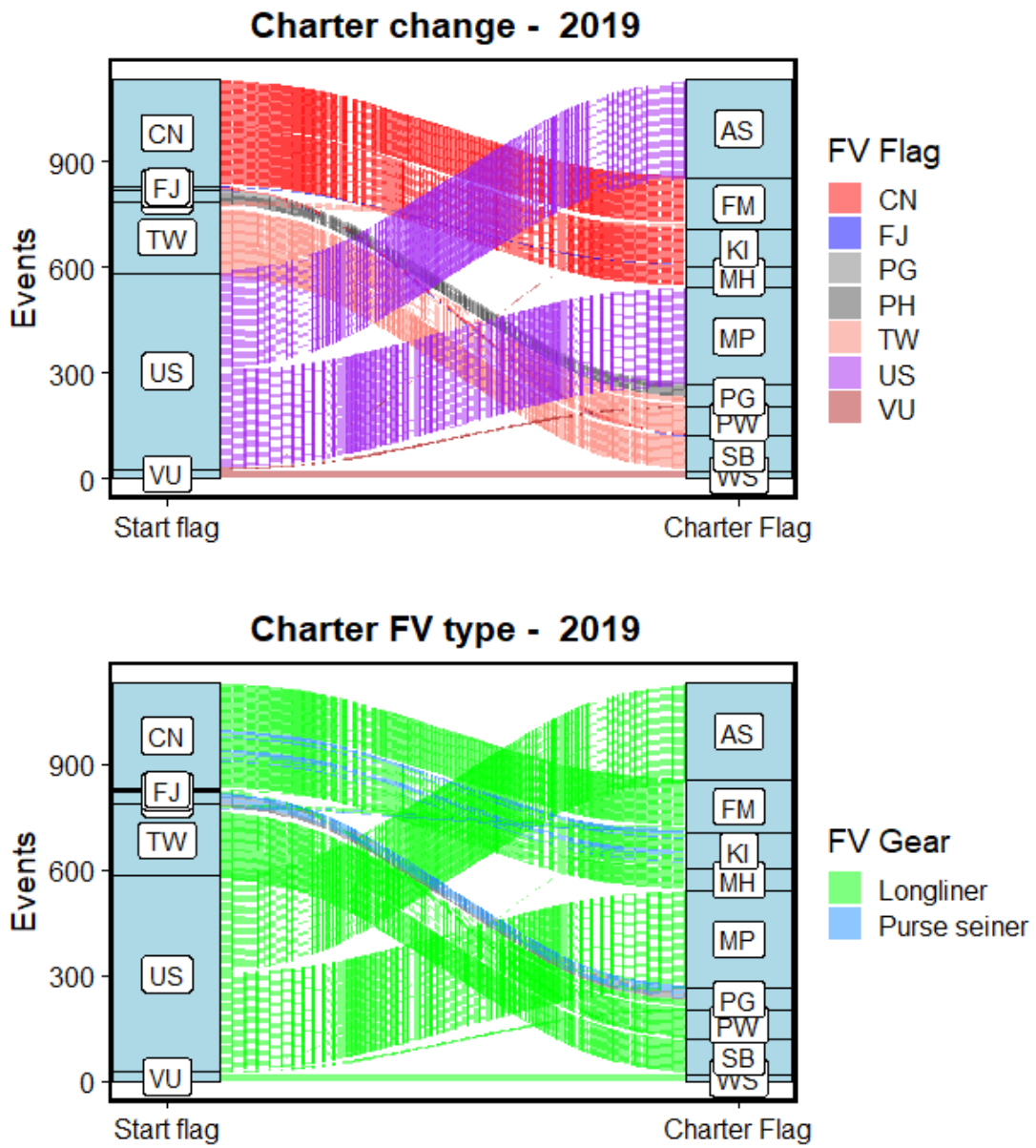


Figure 10: Change in flag through chartering from fishing vessel flag to charter flag (top) and by vessel type (bottom) in 219.

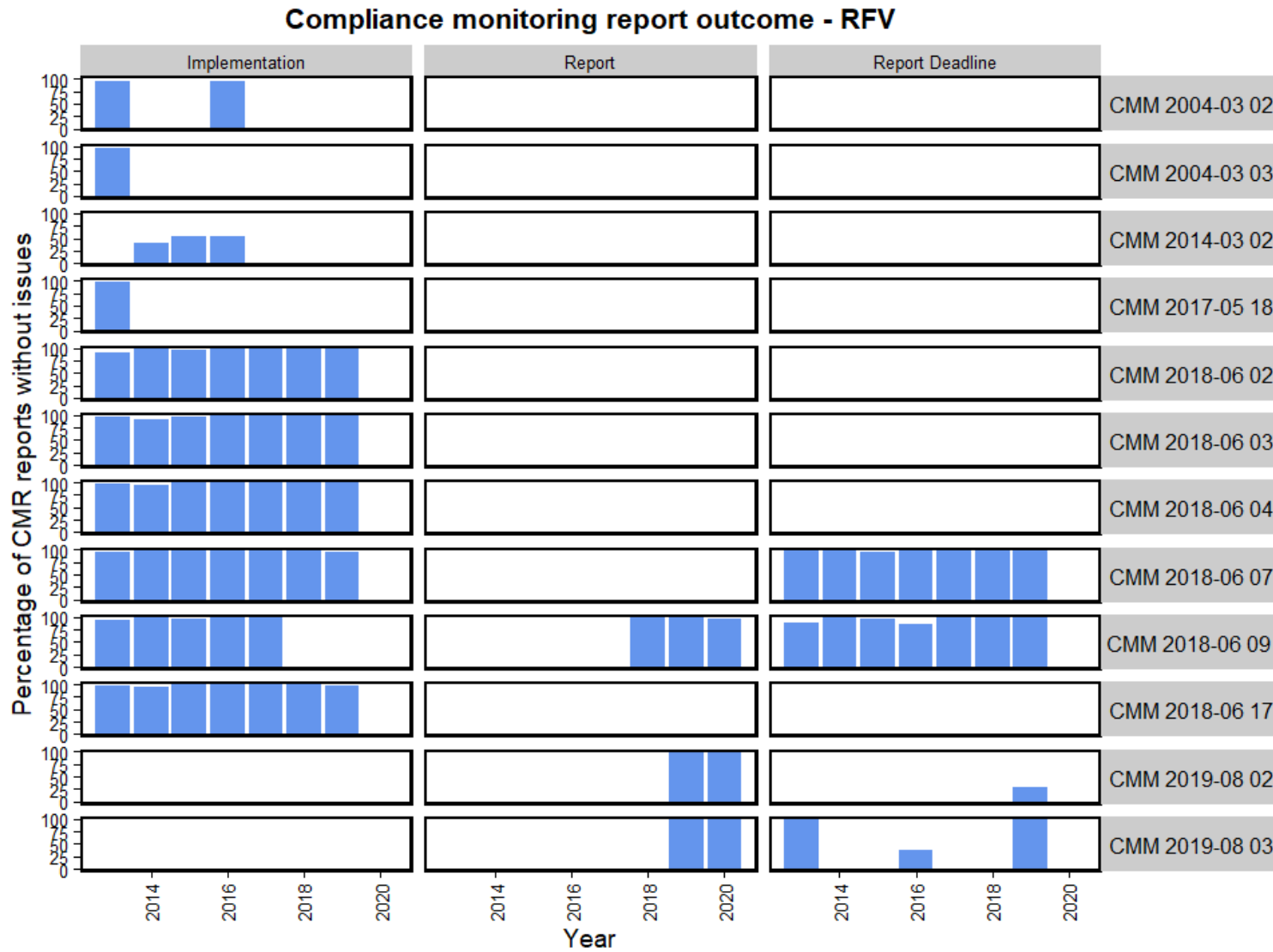


Figure 12: Summary of CMR outcomes for RFV and Charter Obligations (covering 2013 - 2020 activities).

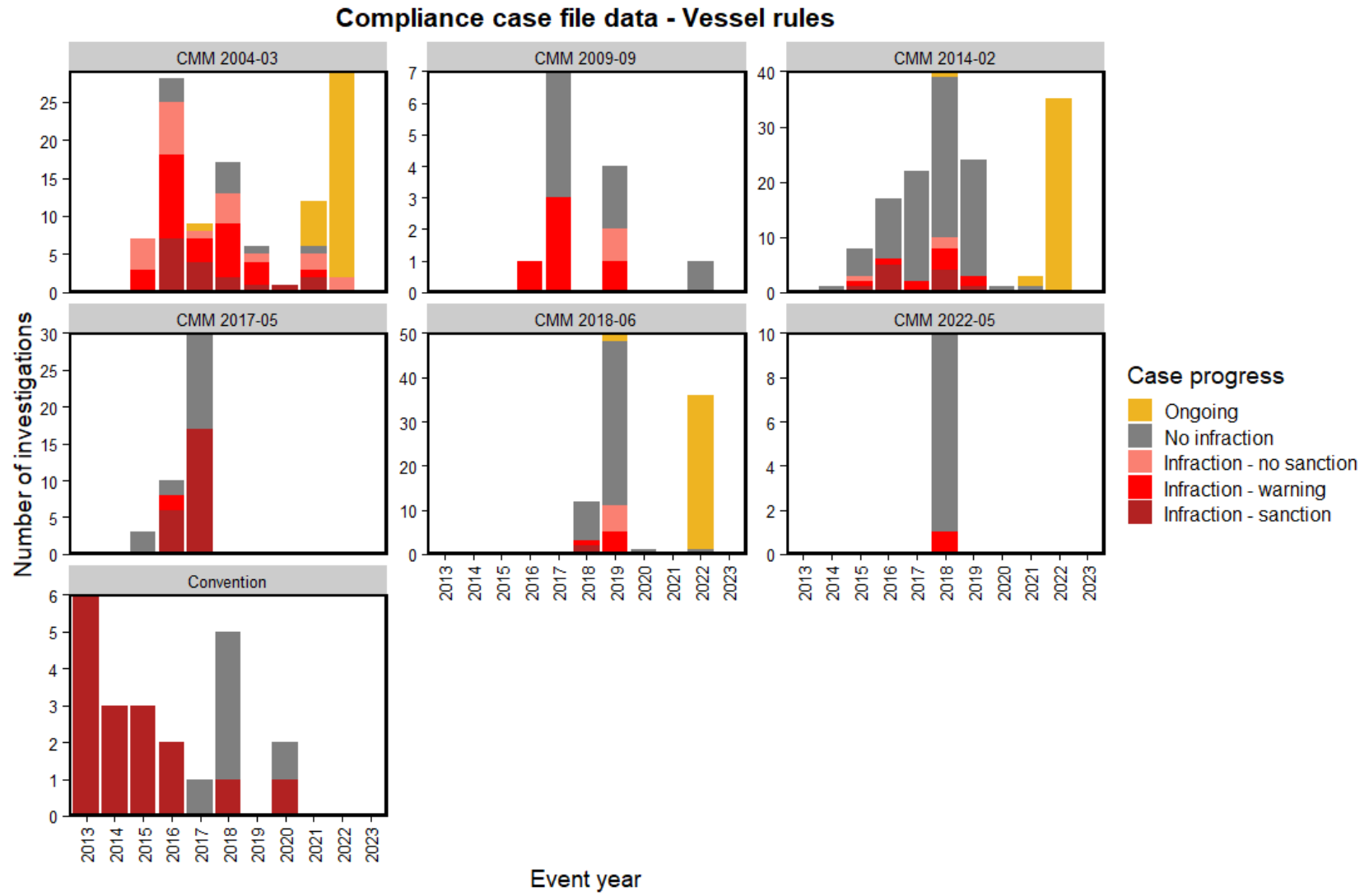


Figure 13: The outcome of alleged infringements of the vessel related CMM obligations that have been reported to WCPFC. (Data for 2023 incomplete)