



**Western and
Central Pacific
Fisheries
Commission**

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

WCPFC-SC20-AR/CCM-36

PANAMA

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

AQUATIC RESOURCES AUTHORITY OF PANAMA

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

2023

PART I

INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

Submission: July 6, 2024

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 responsibility to take all required actions (reporting, participation, communication and assistance) in the WCPFC Fisheries Commission processes, improving our compliance with all obligations adopted by the WCPFC. Through the Fisheries Law No. 204 of March 18, 2021, fishing activities, aquaculture, related activities and activities related to fishing are regulated. This law promotes sustainable fishing methods, and introduces measures to ensure the sustainability of fishing activities and the preservation of marine resources for new generations.

Since 2008, the Republic of Panama has established a vessel monitoring system (VMS) by domestic legislation through Executive Decree No. 17 of 30 June 2008, which was superseded at the end of the year 2023, by Executive Decree No. 13 of 1 November 2023. The VMS device, its installation and sending of positions to the FMC of Panama, is mandatory for all vessels applying for or holding a fishing or fishing support license for international service.

In connection with the commitment to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Panama approved the National Maritime Strategy, and by Executive Decree No. 98-A of November 17, 2009, the National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing was approved. By Law No. 43 of September 14, 2016, it approves the FAO¹ Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA). Similarly by Executive Decree No. 130 of April 14, 2020, the interagency commission to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is created and dictates other provisions.

Panama is part of the following Regional Fisheries Management Organizations:

As a Contracting Member:

1. 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.
2. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), approved by Law No. 74 of 1998.
3. As of July 7, 2022, Panama became a member of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Commission (SPRFMO), approved by Law No. 265 of 2021.

As a Cooperating non-Contracting Party (CNCP):

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

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

Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) for the period 2023.

Panama adopted the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) by Law No. 1 of 2013 and its participation as an adherent member.

Panama has provided its annual financial contribution within the term established by the Commission, in order to comply with the corresponding responsibilities and contribute to the Commission's operation.

ANNUAL FISHERIES INFORMATION

2. Tabular Annual Fisheries Information

Our participatory rights during 2023 in the WCPO are limited to the provision of carrier and bunker vessels. Panama's participatory rights also apply to vessels that supply food, water and spare parts to carrier vessels that engage in transshipment activities, provided that these vessels do not engage in activities supporting fishing vessels, including providing and/or servicing FADs.

3. Background

The Republic of Panama is a Cooperating Non-Contracting Party to the WCPFC, the number of Panamanian flag fishing vessels authorized to fish in this convention during the year 2023 were 144 fishing vessels for fishing related activities or fishing support vessel. However, the active vessels that fished within the area regulated by the Convention for that period were 83 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

The Panamanian flag fishing fleet authorized to fish in the Convention Area during the year 2023, and according to our participation rights are fishing related activities vessels such as: Refrigerated Cargo and Oil Tankers.

Number of active fishing vessels in WCPFC Area.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
No. of registered Vessels	96	90	124	84	167	163	173	166	144
No. of Active Vessels (Fished)	28	74	59	58	87	84	92	90	83

² Under Law No. 204 of March 2021 and Executive Decree No. 13 of November 2023.

5. Coastal State Reporting

Panama is not a WCPFC Coastal State.

6. Socio-economic factors

The Panamanian exports from the agricultural, industrial, agroindustrial and fishing sectors, from January to December 2023, totaled B/. 826.9 million, increasing by 13.3% in FOB value, compared to 2022. 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 re-export 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 38.6% in Panamanian exports of seafood products according to a comparative of the years 2022 and 2023, encouraging results for this economic activity of the country, specifically the fishing sector.

It is important to highlight that the Shrimps, Fishmeal and Fish Oil industry is something of which this country is proud, being the first fisheries exported and certified in Panama and guaranteeing a greater biological and economic benefit, also leaving a closing year 2023 with an increase of 34.8 in FOB.

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.

7. Disposal of Catch

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

8. Onshore Developments

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

9. 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.

10. Status of the Tuna Fishery data collection systems

Carrier (refrigerated cargo) and oil tankers vessels, authorized to transship and transfer fuel in the Convention area, must comply with keeping on board their logbook or fishing log, to report their daily activities carried out within the Convention area.

Carriers must comply with the observer program, and have an observer on board for each trip to observe the activities. Comply with the submission of transshipment data, notifying such activity and the final declaration of the actual transshipment, using the formats established by the Commission, and the unloading of the transshipped products in ports.

Oil tankers must comply with the submission of each of their daily operations using the format used for such purpose (BDN & BRN).

These daily data must be submitted in the established formats and to the communication channels of the Commission and the Authority for the reporting of such reports, which include transshipments and detailed supplies of the fishing vessels for verification, with necessary information in support of the fisheries, which will be used for research and statistics, and scientific databases for the sustainable management of the resources.

11. 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 2009-03 [Swordfish], Para 8

N/A

OBSERVER COVERAGE [WCPFC 11 decision – para 484(b)]

Panama informs the Commission that according to the conservation measures that regulate transshipment, authorized and active vessels within the Convention area will have 100% coverage, therefore, for the period 2023, all Panamanian transport vessels will be required to carry on board an observer from the WCPFC Regional Observer Program (ROP).

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	268,844.00	1,854,306.00		ALB		
	15,826,017.51	3,912,225.00		BET		
	117,294,251.24	1,469,259.00		YFT		
	6,793.00	972,171.00		SWO		
	407,597,564.39	42,668.00		SKJ		
	60,566.00	86,883.00		MLS		
	-	229,712.00		BUM		
	11,990,828.00	1,084,258.00		OTH		
received	915,969.00	3,121,948.00		ALB		
	11,133,455.50	5,219,456.00		BET		
	146,753,158.00	1,718,105.00		YFT		
	302,385.00	1,236,134.00		SWO		
	539,966,638.00	69,770.00		SKJ		
	29,480.00	111,325.00		MLS		
	8,952.00	263,229.00		BUM		
	1,561,979.00	986,223.00		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	178	9		
received	1071	240		

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

CMM 2015-02 [South Pacific Albacore] Para 4

N/A

CMM 2018-03 [Seabirds] Para 13

N/A

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

N/A

CMM 2019-04 [Sharks], Para 4

N/A

**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.

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

Template for CMM 2009-06 paragraph 11 reporting

Transshipment information to be provided annually by CCMs as required by CMM 2009-06 paragraph 11 in accordance with the guidelines in Annex II of the measure.

Each CCM shall include in Part 1 of its Annual Report to the Commission:

(1) the **total quantities, by weight**, of highly migratory fish stocks covered by this measure that were transhipped by fishing vessels the CCM is responsible for reporting against, with those quantities 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) Species	f) Product Form	g) Fishing gear
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	29,480.00	111,325.00		MLS		
	8,952.00	263,229.00		BUM		
	1,561,979.00	986,223.00		OTH		

(2) the **number of transhipments** involving highly migratory fish stocks covered by this measure by fishing vessels that is responsible for reporting against, 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
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