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**Annual Report for the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) and Charter Notifications**

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## Purpose

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

## Introduction

2. The *Conservation and Management Measure on the WCPFC RFV and Authorization to Fish* (CMM 2018-06) and the *Standards, Specifications and Procedures for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission RFV* (RFV SSPs) (CMM 2014-03) regulate how the RFV operates and sets standards for data quality.
3. All vessels flagged to CCMs that have been and are currently authorised to fish in the Convention Area beyond each CCMs area of national jurisdiction are shown on the RFV. Commission members are required to maintain the accuracy and completeness<sup>1</sup> 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 and is no longer authorised to fish in the Convention Area.
4. The RFV is publicly available on the WCPFC website<sup>2</sup>. A range of summary statistics and data filters are available. All data in this paper are based on data extracted as of 1 July 2024.

## Upgrades to the RFV

5. 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 2023.
6. This system meets all the requirements for the RFV but has some added functions and features designed to streamline and simplify how CCMs maintain their vessel records, and providing greater control for CCMs to manage their vessel authorisations to WCPFC. A process of incremental enhancements has been underway since that time which includes:
  - an additional section to the CCM RFV Dashboard that highlights vessels with key missing data for each vessel - the focus is on all data fields in the “Authorization” and Owner/Master boxes and the IMO/LR data field;
  - the ability for CCMs to update the end dates and notes fields for charters where these change. More changes are planned to give CCMs more flexibility to enter and agree updates to charters where these occur;
  - improvements to Secretariat views of fish/did not fish reports, the ability to more clearly identify vessels where a CCM review is required;
  - creating a CCM view of their latest MTU Audit Inspections to easily identify they have met the annual reporting requirement and to provide a view of all historical Audits for a vessel;
  - preventing the creation of a new charter for a vessel that is already under an active charter;
  - an enhanced search for a vessel using a current or previous name;
  - creating a bulk MTU Audit update facility.
7. These changes will allow the Secretariat to focus its support on monitoring data quality and supporting CCMs in understanding and completing RFV data and processes rather than supporting Members with data entry. The Secretariat continues to provide familiarisations on the RFV and to assist CCMs when there are personnel changes or refresher training sessions are needed.
8. Further refinements to the RFV are intended based on CCM feedback including additional filters, summary statistics, dashboards and ability to correct or update details to reflect changes to charter arrangements between the flag State and host CCM. 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.

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<sup>1</sup>Of the RFV SSPs CMM 2014-03

<sup>2</sup>In accordance with decisions of WCPFC14 (WCPFC Summary Report paragraph 428) and the data rules and procedures.

## Mobile RFV

9. Funding received from the United States in 2023 has allowed the development of a mobile friendly version of the RFV that allows the RFV to be installed on some cellphones types. 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 Mobile RFV App can be found on the [WCPFC support webpage](#).
10. The Mobile RFV is expected to be particularly useful for officials involved in routine inspections and and MCS operational activities in the field particularly where internet connections are limited.

## Summary of information in the RFV

### Charter Notification Scheme

11. The RFV reflects charter arrangements notified to the Commission in accordance with [CMM 2021-04 Conservation and Management Measure for Charter Notification Scheme](#) which took effect in February 2022.
12. This measure establishes the requirements for notifying charter arrangements and the information to be submitted for each chartered vessel.
13. Paragraph 8 of this measure sets an expiry date of 28 February 2025 unless renewed by the Commission.

### Breakdown of vessels that are RFV listed

14. The number of vessels that were RFV listed peaked at 8,314 in 2009. Since 2014, this number has progressively reduced from 6,080 to 3,127 in 2024<sup>3</sup> (Table 1). The relative proportions of vessel types in 2023 remains similar to recent years with the majority of RFV vessels classified as longliners (60%) followed by purse seiners (15%) and fish carriers (12%) (Figure 1).
15. Vessels from China, Japan and Chinese Taipei continue to represent the majority of vessels authorised to operate in the Convention Area in 2023 at 54% (a drop of 2% from 2022) but which is similar to previous years.
16. Flag CCM 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 constructed<sup>4</sup> (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. 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.

### Completeness of RFV data fields

17. An evaluation of the completeness of the RFV fields by CCM is shown in Figure 3.
18. When a new vessel is added to the RFV, or when a vessels 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.
19. Some data fields may be blank in certain circumstances, for example, authorization periods for vessels that do not fish beyond their waters of national jurisdiction or for vessels that do not have freezer capacity.
20. The RFV SSPs provides options for what is to be entered in a data field that is not applicable e.g. for vessels with no freezer capacity, 0 is to be entered, and “NA” for freezer capacity units. This would ensure more complete, accurate RFV data. However, it should be noted that the RFV SSPs CMM 2014-03 Footnote 3 states that, “*Although vessels with only the minimum required data will be added to and maintained on the RFV, this does not relieve the responsible CCM of its obligations to provide all the data required under the WCPFC’s applicable conservation and management measures. The consequences of failing to provide such data will be specified outside of these SSPs, such as in the WCPFC’s compliance monitoring scheme*”.

<sup>3</sup>WCPFC-SC20-GN-WP01: Overview of tuna fisheries in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, including economic conditions - 2023 - Rev.01

<sup>4</sup>The RFV SSPs of CMM 2014-03 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”.

21. Despite this, gaps in data fields remain and information becomes out of date. For example, vessel authorization 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 for those vessels that meet the requirements to show one<sup>5</sup>.
22. To improve data quality on the RFV, including completeness and to more fully implement the requirement of Footnote 3, the Secretariat has established a new section on the CCM RFV Dashboard to identify “Key Vessel Data Pending”. The criteria for key missing data are limited to:
  - Missing IMO / LR Number: If vessel is missing IMO / LR number and vessel is of less than 100 GT (or 100 GRT) down to a size of 12 meters in length overall (LOA).
  - Missing owner / master details: If vessel is missing owner name, owner address, master name or master nationality.
  - Missing authorization details: If vessel is missing authorization number granted by the flag State or form of authorization granted by the flag State or authorization area.
23. The Secretariat will periodically follow up on missing or incomplete data fields with CCMs where the gaps are not being addressed. 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 active vessels with expired authorization periods particularly when undertaking high seas boardings and inspections or surveillance activities. In addition, a number of data fields in the RFV support the Secretariat’s verification of CCM annual reporting in accordance with Audit Points.

## Overview of vessel activity authorised on the RFV

### Vessels authorised to transship

24. 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 unless specifically authorised to do so by the flag CCM and where the vessel has an active status of RFV Listed (Figure 4).
25. Figure 4 shows the number and percentage of vessels authorised for high seas transshipments. The figures for those vessel types that are authorised has remained relatively stable over the last three years averaging 83% longliners, 9% carriers and 3% pole and line vessels.

### Vessels under charter

26. Both flag CCM and host CCM provide their notification of a charter directly into the RFV. An automated notification indicates when one of the parties has added information, noting pending action is required by the other party. The numbers of charters since 1997 are shown in Table 2; Figures 5 and 6 provides information on the CCMs involved in chartering. Since 2021, annual charter numbers have been relatively stable.

### Trends in chartering

27. Overall charters have increased since 2014 (Figure 5). Prior to 2016, most charters were to the Solomon Islands. From 2015 onwards, a high number of charters have been to Guam, American Samoa, and CNMI, as well as FSM and Kiribati (Figure 5). All charters to US territories are from USA flagged vessels, whereas most charters to Pacific Island CCMs are from China and Chinese Taipei (Figure 6). Most of these charters involve longline vessels (Table 2).

<sup>5</sup>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 CCMs 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 CCMs area of national jurisdiction, have an IMO or LR issued (CMM 2018-06 footnote 4). (CMM 2018-06 footnote 4).

28. More detailed change in flag CCMs is shown by fishing vessel flag and vessel type in Figure 7 to Figure 12. In 2023, most charters were of Chinese and Chinese Taipei vessels chartered to the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and the Solomon Islands. The majority of these were longline vessels (Figure 7). Each year there is typically a large number of charters by the US. There were a large number of longline vessels from the USA chartering to American Samoa and to a lesser extent the Northern Marianas in 2022 but in 2023 chartering only to Northern Marianas (Figure 7 and Figure 8 ).

## CCM Reporting under the RFV

### Fished/did not fish reporting

29. 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
  - in preparing the Compliance Monitoring Report (CMR).
30. Since late 2023, CCMs were using the RFV fished/did not fished facility. The Secretariat has now also begun streamlining its internal review process. This resulted in all except 1 fished/did not fish report being received on time and many reviews were completed in advance of the release of the draft Compliance Monitoring Report in late July, simplifying CCM reporting. Table 3 summarises 2023 fished/did not fish reporting by CCMs. The Secretariat appreciates the support and feedback from CCMs during this transition.

### Review of RFV implementation by applicable CCMs under the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) 2014 - 2023

31. Figure 13 shows the result of evaluations of CCM compliance with RFV obligations 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.

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

32. 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 14. Note the references to CMMs include historical versions of the RFV related obligations.
33. 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 some vessel reporting issues that reflect CMM 2014-02 9a requirements. In these cases the Secretariat resolves these directly with the CCM and cases are no longer created. This will only occur where a vessel is of RFV Listed status and therefore, active.
34. Since 2022 there has been an increase in potential infringements reported through MCS activities (Cases in accordance with Article 25 2. These show increased detections of potentially unauthorised fishing (CMM 2018-06) and an associated lack of VMS reporting (2014-02) and detected incursions into national waters (Convention).

## Secretariat Observations

35. The Secretariat notes:
- (a) in 2023, more CCM's completed early fished/did not fish reporting, enabling reviews to be completed and in most cases, any issues resolved before the release of the draft Compliance Monitoring Report;
  - (b) the importance of accurate, complete and up-to-date information on the RFV as a core dataset for the Commission, individual CCMs and more widely, and is recognized in CMM 2018-06 Footnote 3;
  - (c) the upgraded RFV is providing the opportunity for Secretariat resources to focus more on identifying and working with CCMs to make RFV data quality more robust; and
  - (d) the upgraded RFV allows CCMs and the Secretariat to more routinely focus on any data quality and completeness, reducing reliance on the Commission's monitoring and verification processes during CMR discussions through its Compliance Monitoring Scheme.

## Recommendation

36. TCC is invited to consider the renewal of CMM 2021-04 Charter Notification Scheme, recognising paragraph 8 sets an expiry date of 28 February 2025.

## Tables

**Table 1: Number of vessels on the RFV 2008-2024. 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.**

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	4,675
2017	4,563
2018	3,995
2019	3,930
2020	3,521
2021	3,424
2022	3,333
2023	3,213
2024	3,090



**Table 2: Summary of the vessels notified as being chartered, leased or other mechanisms by CCMs, by gear and by year (CMM 2021-04 paragraph 6).**

Chartering CCM	Vessel type	Fishing vessel CCM	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
American Samoa	Longliner	United States of America	138	133	0	137	0	0
Fiji	Longliner	China	0	0	0	2	0	0
Federated States of Micronesia	Longliner	China	66	59	38	20	30	15
	Longliner	Chinese Taipei	5	20	0	0	1	2
	Longliner	Vanuatu	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Purse seiner	Chinese Taipei	2	2	0	0	0	0
Kiribati	Longliner	China	33	30	34	39	77	61
	Longliner	Fiji	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Purse seiner	China	14	14	16	14	14	18
	Purse seiner	Nauru	0	0	2	3	5	6
Korea (Republic of)	Bunker	Panama	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Fish carrier	Panama	0	0	1	0	0	0
Marshall Islands	Longliner	China	22	13	43	18	30	25
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Longliner	United States of America	139	134	141	135	145	0
Papua New Guinea	Fish carrier	Philippines	9	10	13	8	5	5
	Longliner	China	0	0	0	10	9	0
	Longliner	Chinese Taipei	10	0	0	0	0	0
	Longliner	Vanuatu	2	2	0	0	0	0
	Purse seiner	Nauru	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Purse seiner	Papua New Guinea	7	3	2	1	1	0
	Purse seiner	Philippines	15	26	29	26	16	12
	Purse seiner	Chinese Taipei	0	0	0	1	1	4
	Purse seiner	Vanuatu	0	0	0	0	2	5
Support vessel	Philippines	9	3	18	17	19	6	
Philippines	Support vessel	Philippines	0	0	1	1	0	0
Palau	Longliner	Chinese Taipei	40	0	0	0	0	0
Solomon Islands	Fish carrier	Chinese Taipei	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Longliner	China	6	0	11	5	0	0
	Longliner	Fiji	1	1	1	2	0	0
	Longliner	Chinese Taipei	46	27	27	48	56	26
	Longliner	Vanuatu	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Purse seiner	Chinese Taipei	0	0	0	1	1	0
Samoa	Longliner	Cook Islands	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Longliner	Vanuatu	10	20	0	10	14	16

**Table 3: Number of vessels on the RFV in 2023 that CCMs have indicated have fished or not fished.**

CCM	Did not fish	Fished	Total vessels
Australia	34	15	49
Canada	6	0	6
Cook Islands	4	8	12
China	260	355	615
Curacao	3	0	3
Ecuador	2	5	7
European Union	18	12	30
Federated States of Micronesia	3	41	44
Indonesia	21	1	22
Japan	288	385	673
Kiribati	3	14	17
Korea (Republic of)	32	148	180
Liberia	6	0	6
Marshall Islands	0	13	13
New Caledonia	17	0	17
Nauru	0	24	24
New Zealand	1	3	4
Panama	60	80	140
French Polynesia	89	0	89
Papua New Guinea	17	0	17
Philippines	138	243	381
Solomon Islands	0	9	9
El Salvador	2	2	4
Thailand	6	0	6
Tonga	2	0	2
Tuvalu	0	7	7
Chinese Taipei	141	504	645
United States of America	31	168	199
Vanuatu	22	64	86

# Figures

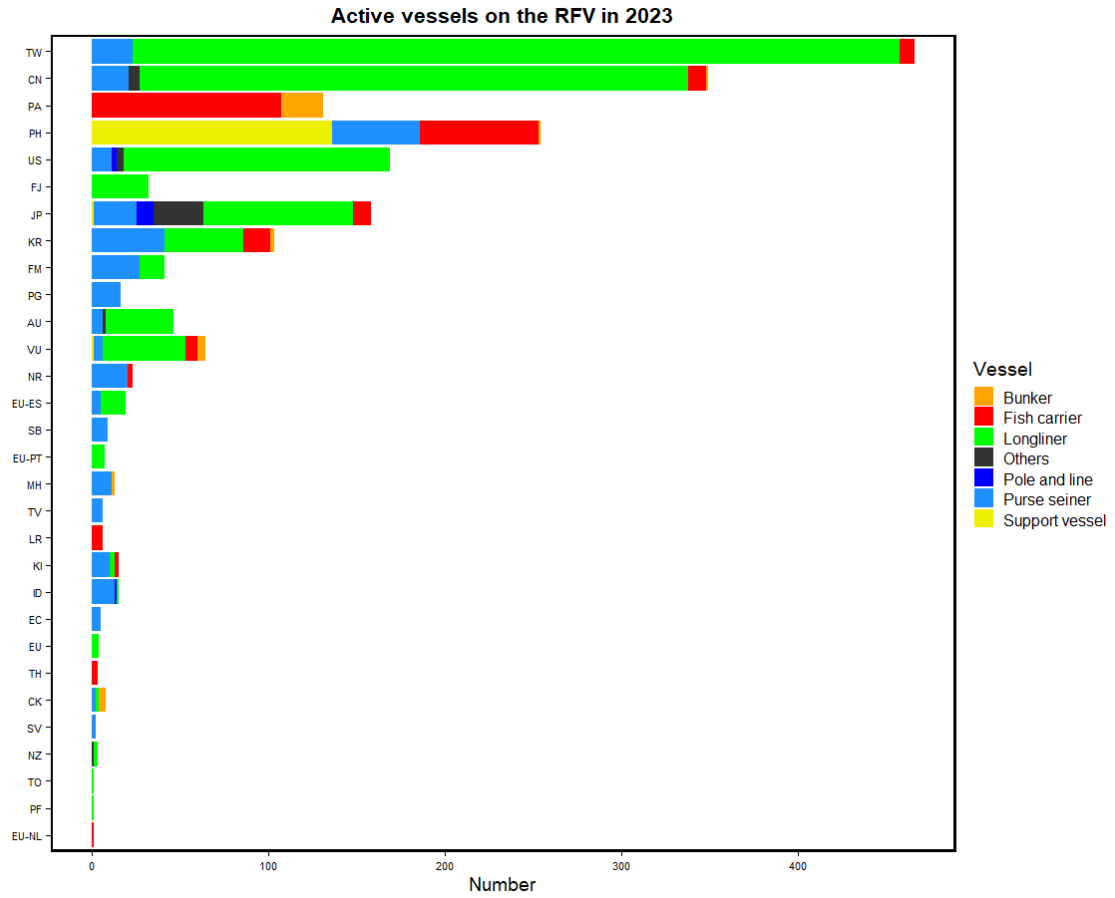


Figure 1: Active vessels on the RFV by flag State and vessel type.

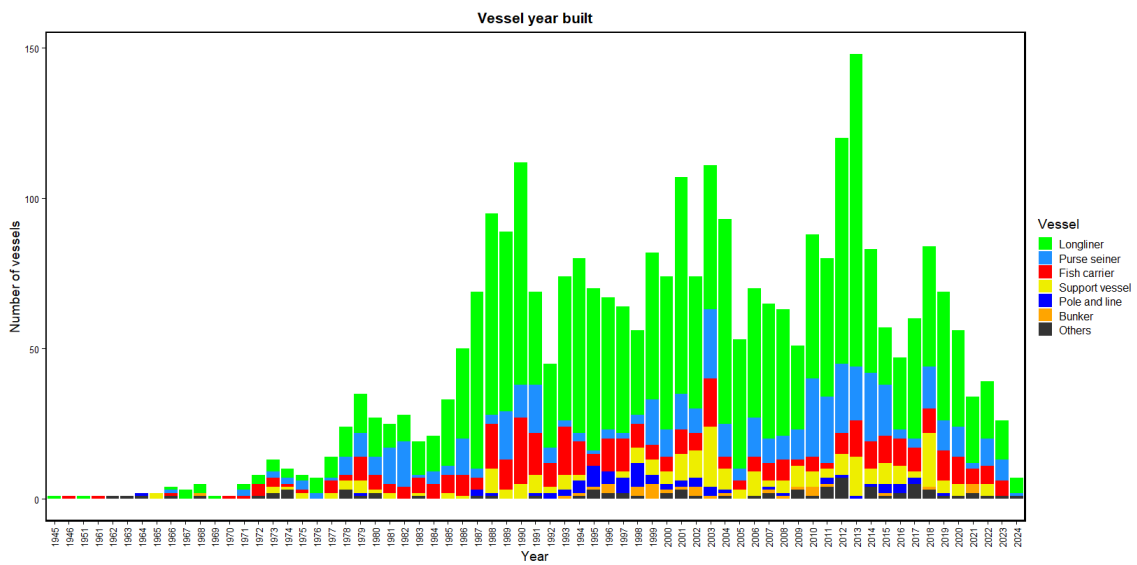


Figure 2: Year built for vessels on the RFV from 1945 to 2023, where the data were provided.

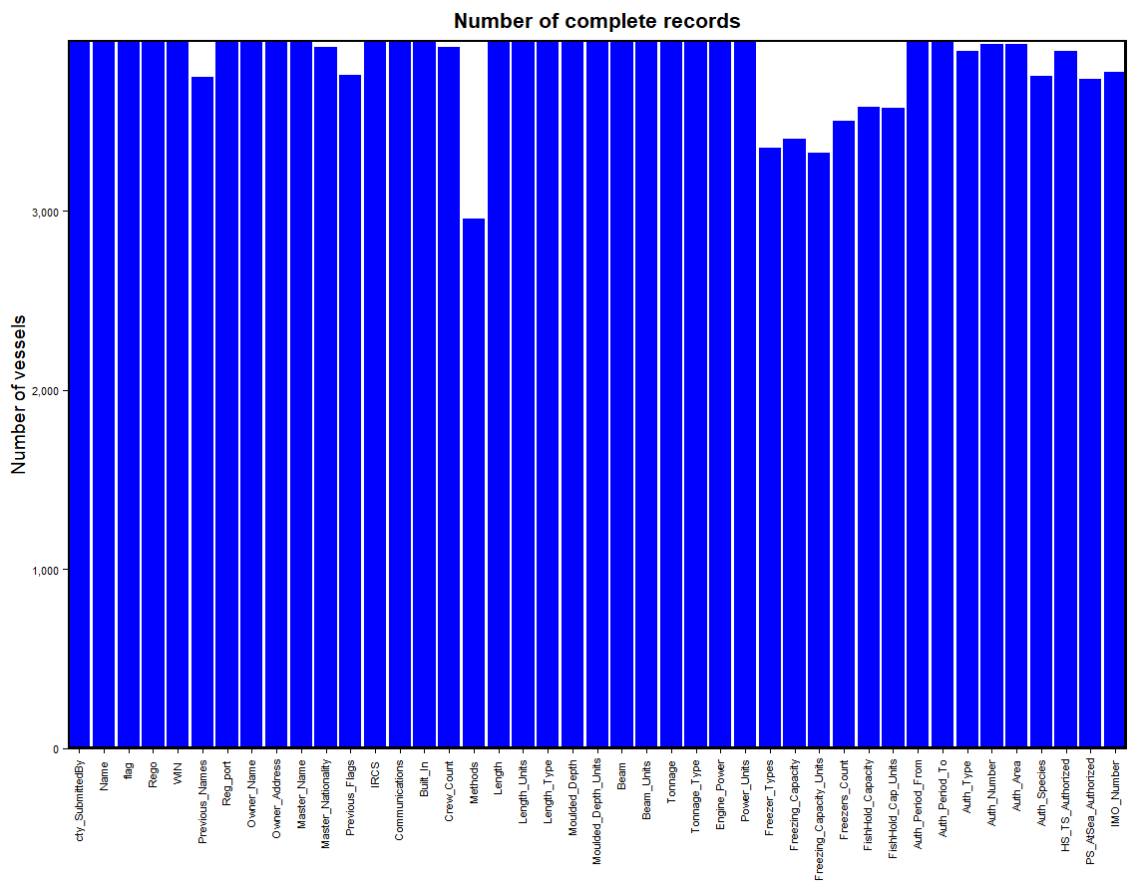


Figure 3: WCPFC data fields on the RFV and the level of completeness.

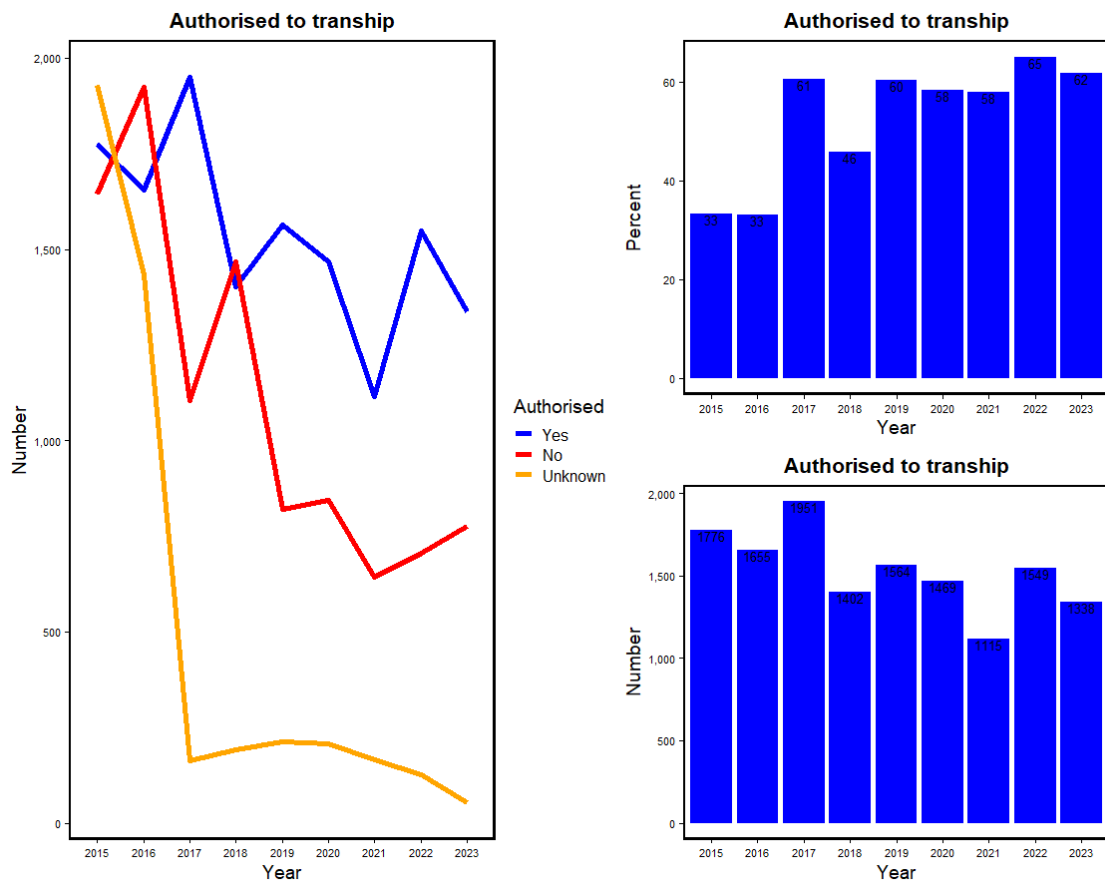


Figure 4: Percentage of vessels on the WCPFC RFV that are authorised to tranship.

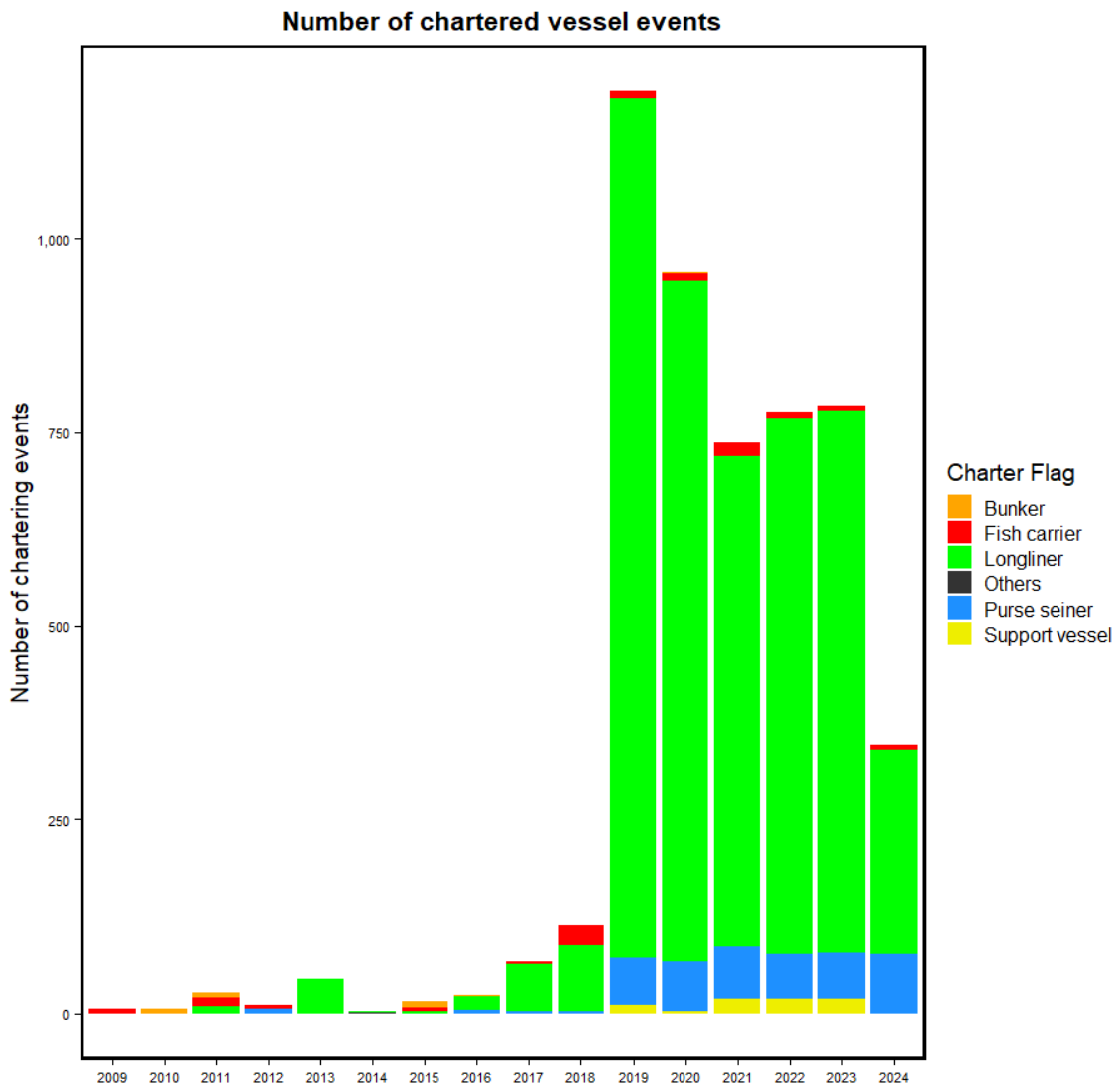


Figure 5: Comparison of the number of chartered vessels recorded on the WCPFC RFV between 2009 and July 2024.

### Charter CCM

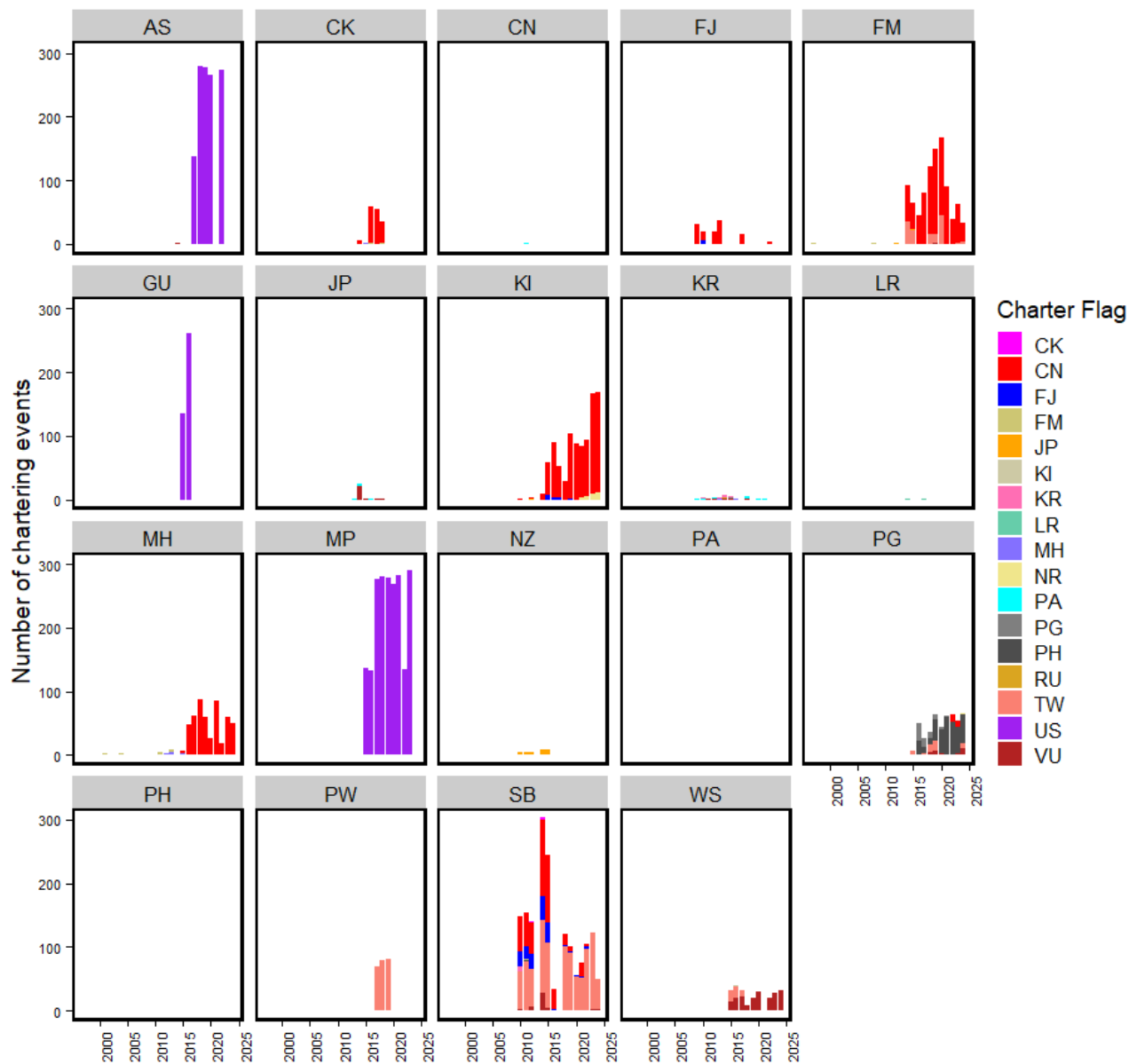


Figure 6: The number of charter events in the WCPFC Convention Area by year, chartering (Host) CCM and vessel flag State from 2009 - July 2024.

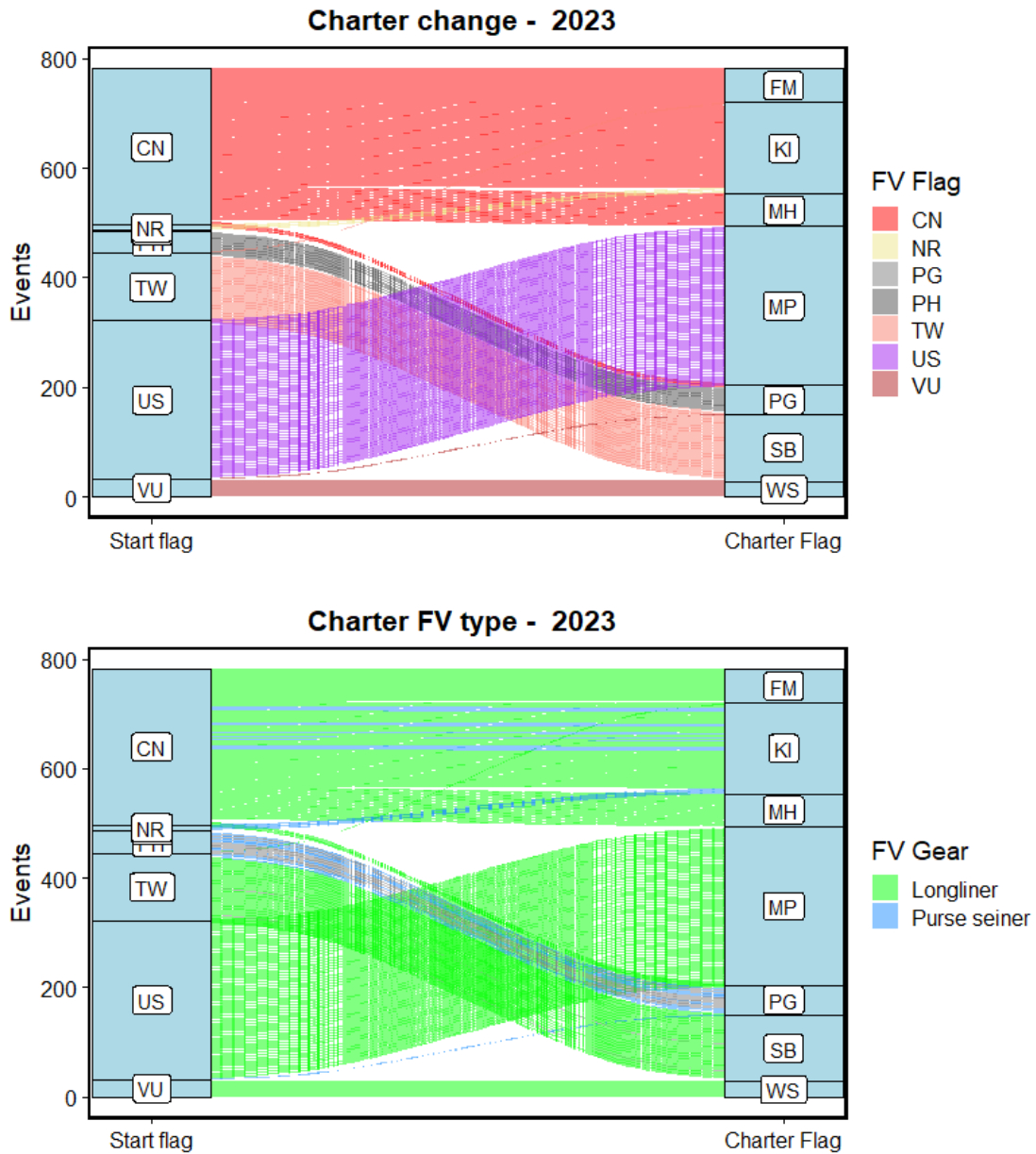


Figure 7: Change in flag through chartering from fishing vessel flag to charter flag (top) and by vessel type (bottom) in 2023.





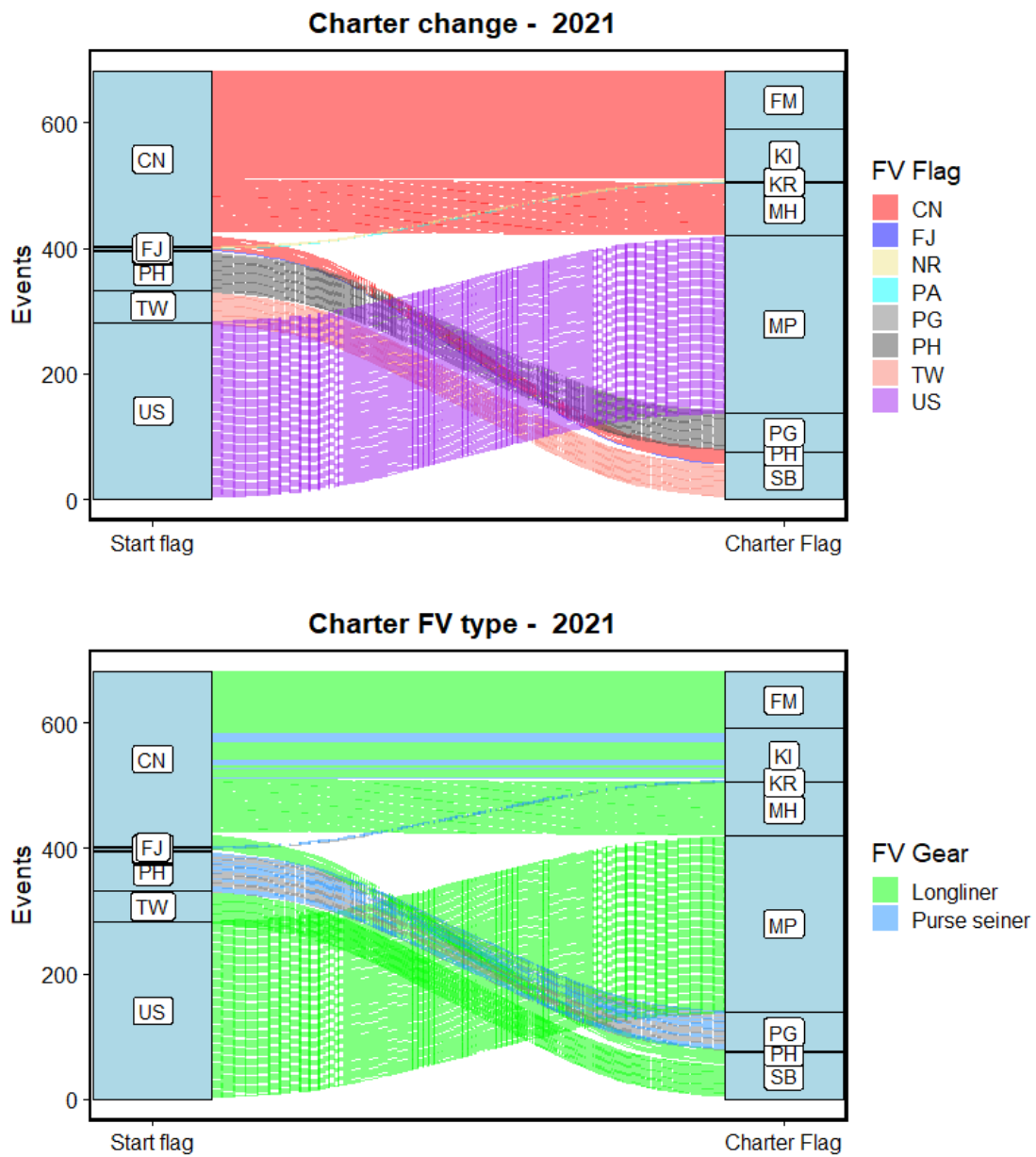


Figure 9: Change in flag through chartering from fishing vessel flag to charter flag (top) and by vessel type (bottom) in 2021.







### Compliance monitoring report outcome - RFV

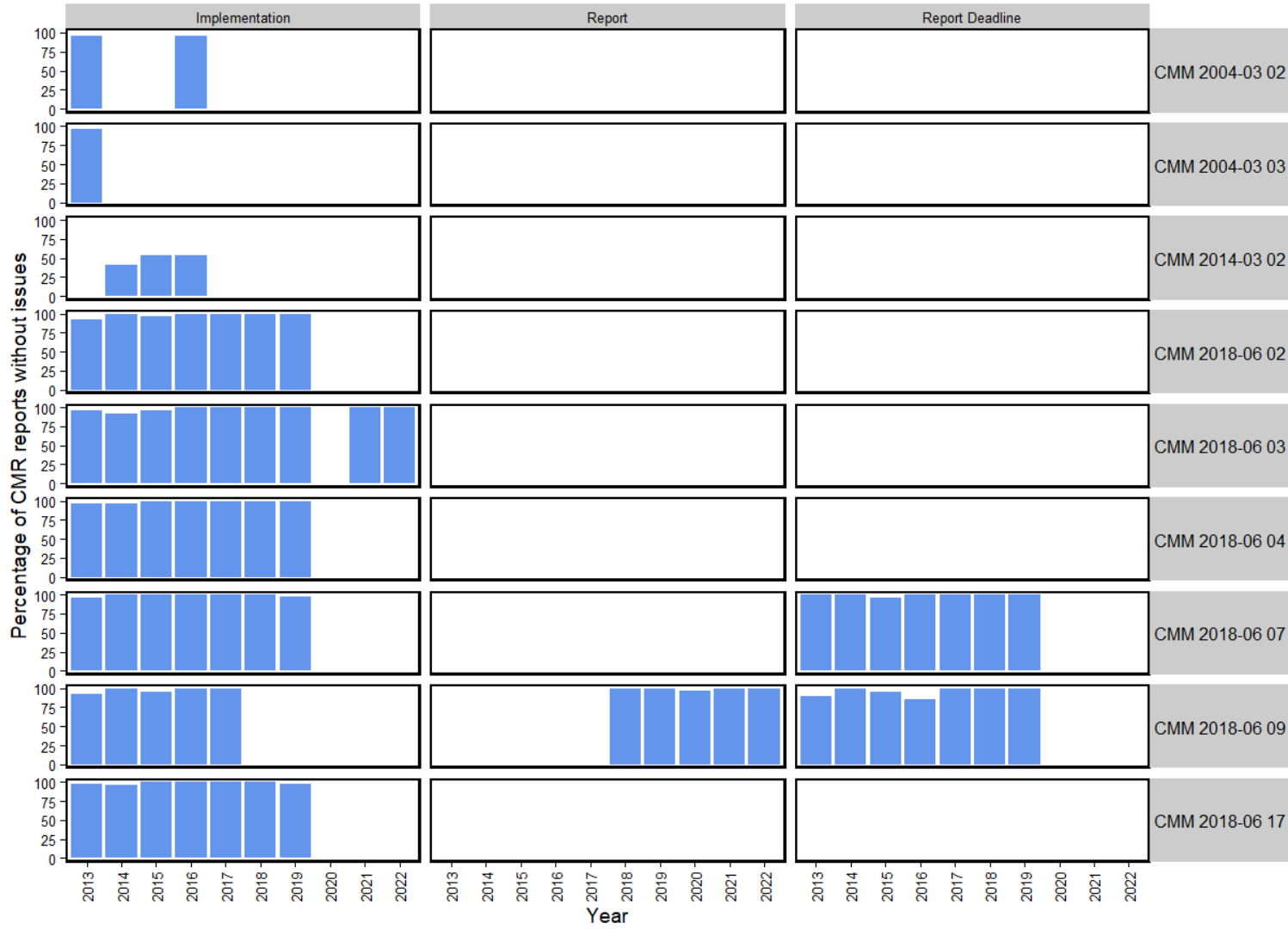


Figure 13: Summary of CMR outcomes for RFV and Charter Obligations (covering 2013 - 2022 activities).

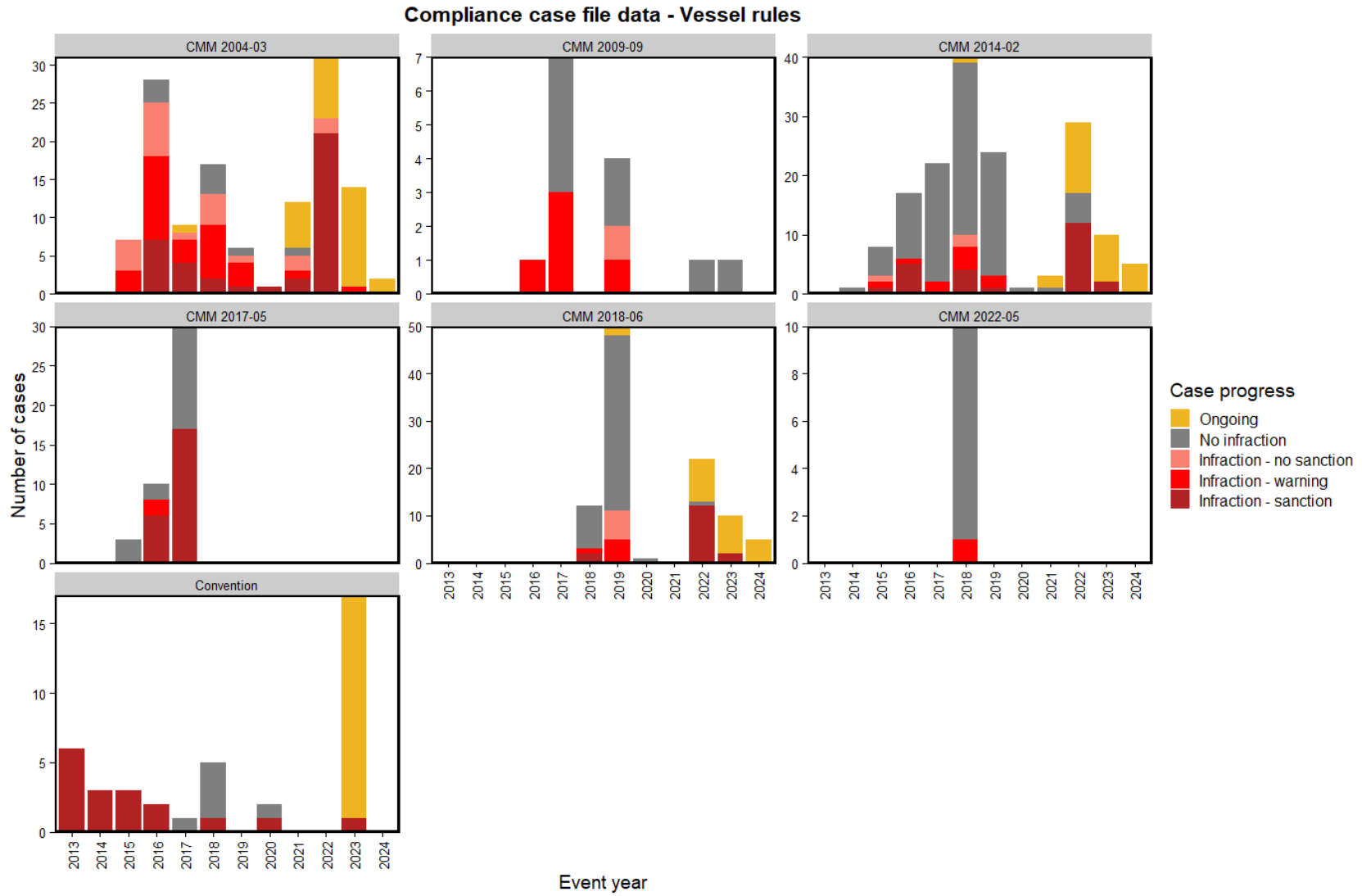


Figure 14: The outcome of alleged infringements of the vessel related CMM obligations that have been reported to WCPFC.