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Annual report on the Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area (EHSP-SMA)

WCPFC-TCC20-2024-RP06

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Submitted by the Secretariat

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Purpose

1. This paper reports on activities in the Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area (EHSP-SMA).
2. The EHSP-SMA is the area of high seas bounded by the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of the Cook Islands to the west, French Polynesia to the east and Kiribati to the north.

Introduction

3. The management and reporting arrangements for the EHSP-SMA were first established through CMM 2010-02, and then refined through CMM 2016-02 Conservation and Management Measure for the Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area.
4. Vessels in the EHSP-SMA reporting to the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) are displayed as a “live list¹” on the secure [EHSP-SMA](#) page on the WCPFC website. A sample screen shot of the “live list” is shown in Figure 1. Vessels shown in the live list are also directly linked to the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV).

Review of available data

Vessel sightings

5. Paragraph 2 of CMM 2016-02 encourages reporting of any fishing vessel sightings in the EHSP-SMA to the WCPFC Secretariat. During the reporting period, the Secretariat did not receive any sighting reports from flag CCMs².

Vessels and VMS reporting

6. Table 1 and Table 2 show the number of vessels by gear type and flag respectively, that reported VMS positions in the EHSP-SMA for each month from 2019 to December 2023.
7. Table 3 summarises entry and exit reporting by vessel flag and type. The tables indicate the primary activity is from Chinese Taipei flagged longline vessels mainly between February to October. During 2019 and 2020 there were similar numbers of vessels operating in the area (209 and 211). During 2021 and 2022, the number of vessels operating was 58% and 60% respectively, of the average of 2019 and 2020 numbers. This is likely to have been due to changes in operational activity arising from COVID-19. In 2023, the numbers of vessels operating has remained low in January and February but in March to May has risen to the highest level seen in the previous four years. In 2023 there was a 38% increase in the number of vessels compared to the 2019/2020 average. Table 3 and Table AI - 1 summarise the numbers of entry and exit alerts generated by the Commission VMS for 2019-2023.
8. The reliability of entry and exit reporting generated by the Commission VMS has improved since 2020 and remains high. The lack of sightings of vessels reported to the Commission suggests there has been no vessels operating in the EHSP-SMA that have not been reporting to the Commission VMS although this cannot be verified.
9. More detail on the vessels operating in or transiting the EHSP-SMA is available in Annex 1 which lists the 98 vessels (86 LL, 6 PS, 3 fish carriers and 3 bunkers) that were reporting to the WCPFC VMS from the EHSP-SMA during 2023.

Fishing activity and catch

10. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the proportion of catch by flag and in total tonnages since 2000 and includes a more detailed view of this data for more recent years 2017-2022.
11. Data for the purse seine fishery shows activity by one flag CCM for the three years 2012-2014, with the catch volumes of less than 500 tons. While some purse seine vessels have reported on the VMS within the EHSP-SMA, no purse seine catch has been reported in the most recent years. Further investigations shows that these records are transits and not fishing effort.

¹In accord with CMM 2016-02 paragraph 5

²To assist with internal record keeping at the WCPFC Secretariat, copies of vessel sighting reports required in accordance with paragraph 2 of CMM 2016-02 are to be submitted the Commission and can be sent to the Secretariat by email: EasternHighSeasSpecialManagementArea@wcpfc.int.

12. The historical flag CCM involvement in the EHSP-SMA longline fishery and their reported catches have changed over time, most significantly between 2003-2016.
13. Over the last seven years (2017-2023) CCM involvement and the reported longline catches have become less variable as shown by the total annual catches and CCM catch proportions (Figure 2³ and Figure 3). Longline catch peaked in 2012 and again in 2017, 2019 and 2020 at around 2000 tons with catch levels significantly lower in other years.
14. The main species taken from the EHSP-SMA by the longline fleet is albacore followed by yellowfin and bigeye tuna. Historical purse seine fleet catch was mainly skipjack with some yellowfin and bigeye (Figure 4 and Figure 5).
15. Over the most recent three years, the average catch in the EHSP-SMA relative to the WCPO catch represents 1% for albacore, 0.03% for bigeye, 0.05% for yellowfin and less than 0.01% for skipjack.

Transshipment

16. CMM 2016-02 prohibited all transshipment activities in the EHSP-SMA from 1 January 2019. There was no report of transshipments in the EHSP-SMA.
17. The Secretariat has refined an analytical tool to assess potential transshipments by identifying vessels with VMS positions in close proximity for 4 hours or more (Figure 6). More details on this tool are available in [WCPCF-TCC19-RP03](#).
18. Between 2018-2023 there were a number of interactions between longliners and in a few cases longliners and bunker vessels from 4 flag CCMs. The majority of these were in 2020 and all except one of those were between longliners. This analysis indicates no interactions between carriers and catching vessels. Further refinement of this analysis will be undertaken based on additional data held by the Commission. This work will identify the extent to which further verification is possible or whether additional sources of data are needed to verify the vessel activity in discussion with the relevant CCMs. No information is provided from bunker vessels.

Summary of Members MCS and Inspection Activities, including in the high seas

19. The Secretariat did not receive any reports of alleged infringements by vessels operating in the EHSP-SMA from monitoring, control and surveillance activities such as high seas boarding and inspections or aerial surveillance activities.
20. The outcomes of four historical cases for CMM 2010-02 02 (VMS entry and exit reporting) are shown in Figure 7. No cases have been reported under the replacement CMM 2016-02.

CMS Outcomes 2013 - 2020

21. Figure 8 provides the result of the evaluation of CMMs 2010-02 and 2016-02 under the CMS over the years. CMM 2010-02 was evaluated annually between 2013 (for Reporting Year 2012) and 2016 (for Reporting Year 2015) and the replacement CMM 2016-02 was evaluated in 2020.
22. Figure 8 shows that between 2013-2016 there were ongoing implementation issues with the required entry and exit manual reporting. CMM 2016-02 removed the need for manual entry and exit reporting from 2017. Instead, alerts are automatically generated by the Commission VMS.
23. Transshipments have been banned in the EHSP-SMA since 1 January 2019 and an evaluation of implementation in 2020 indicated this has been duly implemented by CCMs in legally binding instruments.

³Source : SPC data "Annual catch estimates by EEZ"

Tables

Table 1: Number of vessels by vessel type, year and month in EHSP-SMA (Source: WCPFC VMS data).

Vessel type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019												
Bunker	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Fish carrier	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0
Longliner	0	8	22	24	37	22	12	11	20	24	10	4
Purse seiner	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	8	24	27	37	24	13	12	20	26	11	5
2020												
Bunker	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	0
Fish carrier	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Longliner	3	12	16	24	27	25	32	24	11	15	7	0
Pole and line	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Purse seiner	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	4	12	17	25	28	25	33	27	15	15	7	3
2021												
Bunker	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
Fish carrier	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longliner	3	16	15	9	17	17	9	6	10	5	2	1
Purse seiner	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	8	16	15	10	18	18	11	6	11	5	2	2
2022												
Bunker	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Longliner	0	5	10	7	11	11	16	21	14	2	2	1
Purse seiner	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Total	2	6	10	8	12	11	16	23	14	2	3	2
2023												
Bunker	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fish carrier	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Longliner	1	3	30	29	46	45	41	37	22	14	4	5
Purse seiner	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Total	2	4	31	30	46	47	42	37	22	15	7	8

Table 2: Number of vessels by CCM, year and month in EHSP-SMA (Source: WCPFC VMS data).

Flag CCM	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019												
Cook Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
China	0	0	4	1	20	7	1	1	6	11	4	0
Fiji	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Liberia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Panama	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Chinese Taipei	0	7	18	22	17	15	12	9	14	11	3	4
United States of America	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vanuatu	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Total	2	8	24	27	37	24	13	12	20	26	11	5
2020												
Cook Islands	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
China	1	5	11	4	2	5	3	6	3	2	0	0
Panama	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	0
Chinese Taipei	2	7	6	20	25	20	29	18	9	13	7	0
United States of America	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Total	4	12	17	25	28	25	33	27	15	15	7	3
2021												
Cook Islands	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
China	3	8	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
EU-Netherlands	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Panama	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese Taipei	0	8	15	9	14	14	8	5	10	5	2	1
United States of America	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	8	16	15	10	18	18	11	6	11	5	2	2
2022												
Cook Islands	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
China	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
EU-Spain	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese Taipei	0	5	9	7	7	10	14	12	13	2	0	1
United States of America	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Vanuatu	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	2	0
Total	2	6	10	8	12	11	16	23	14	2	3	2
2023												
Cook Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
China	1	2	8	7	8	19	9	8	11	2	2	2
EU-Spain	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Korea (Republic of)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Panama	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese Taipei	1	1	23	22	38	26	32	28	11	12	3	3
United States of America	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Vanuatu	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	2	4	31	30	46	47	42	37	22	15	7	8

Table 3: Summary of entry and exit alerts for the EHSP-SMA generated by the Commission VMS by flag in 2023 (including transit reports).

CCM	Vessel type	Number of vessels on VMS	Reported entry alerts	Reported exit alerts
Cook Islands	Purse seiner	1	1	1
China	Fish carrier	2	3	3
	Longliner	34	54	54
EU-Spain	Purse seiner	1	1	1
Korea (Republic of)	Bunker	1	1	1
	Fish carrier	1	1	1
Panama	Bunker	1	1	1
Chinese Taipei	Longliner	50	133	133
United States of America	Purse seiner	4	5	5
Vanuatu	Bunker	1	1	1
	Longliner	1	1	1

Figures



Figure 1: A sample screen shot of the “live list” on the WCPFC website.

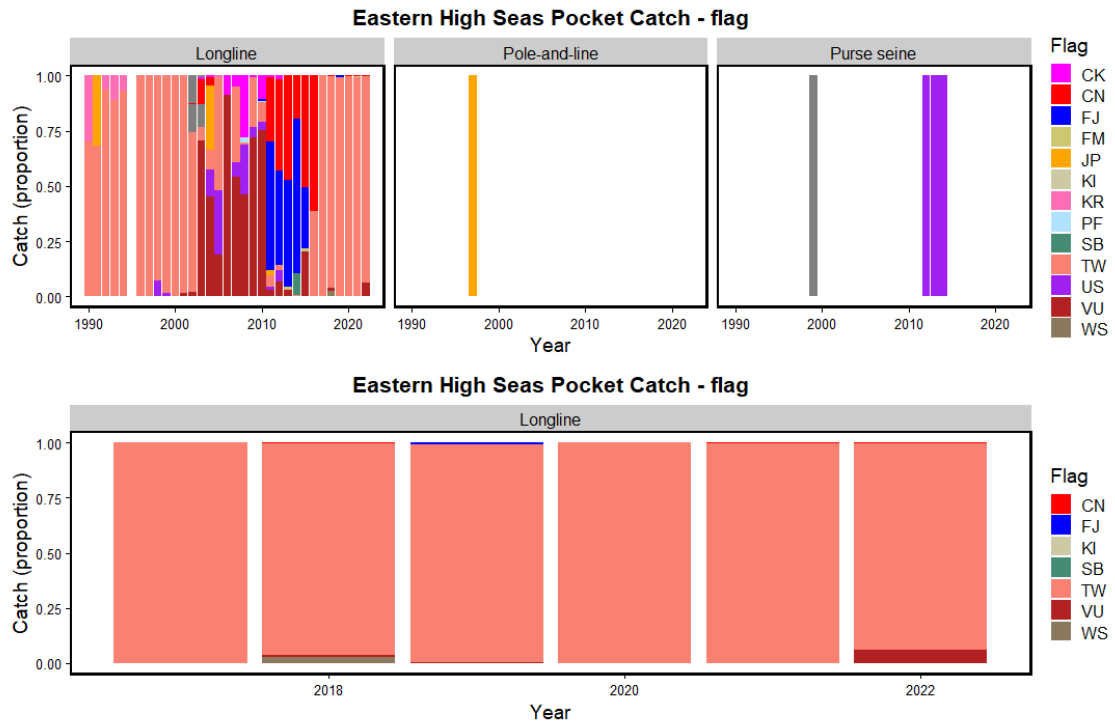


Figure 2: Proportion of catch made by flag in the EHSP-SMA LL and PS fleets by year.

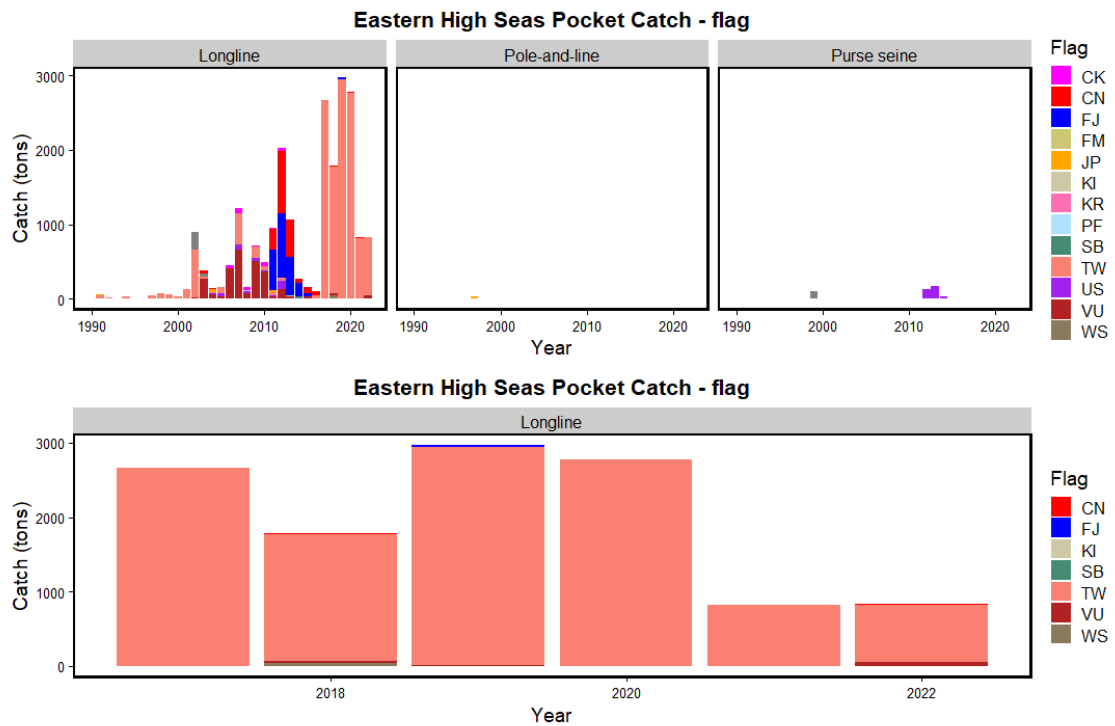


Figure 3: Catch from in the EHSP-SMA LL and PS fleets by year.

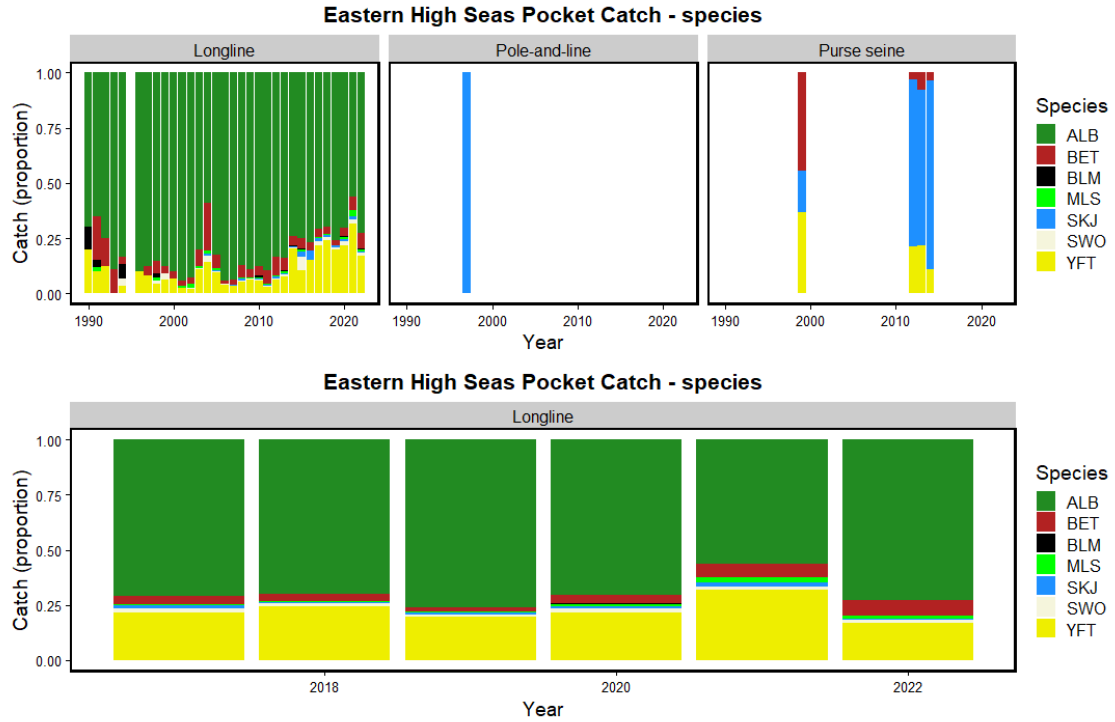


Figure 4: Proportion and catch made in EHSP-SMA by LL and PS fleets by year. *Overview of tuna fisheries in the WCPO, Including Economic Conditions - 2022 WCPFC-SC19-2023/GN-WP-1.*

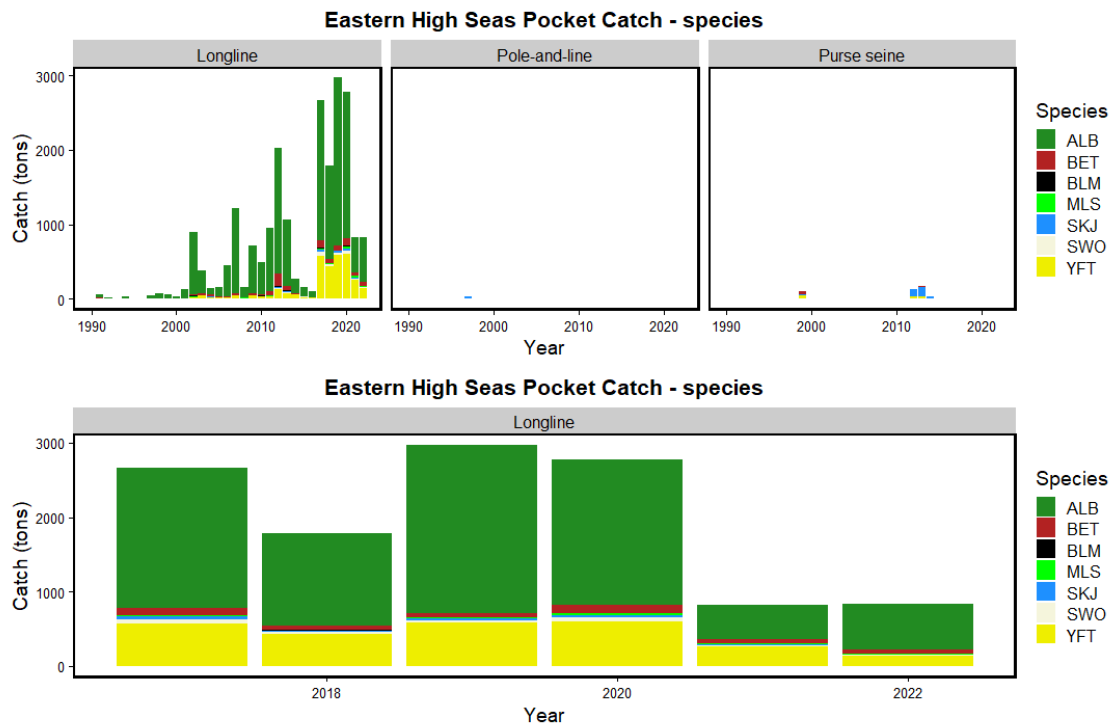


Figure 5: Catch made in EHSP-SMA by LL and PS fleets by year. *Overview of tuna fisheries in the WCPO, Including Economic Conditions - 2022 WCPFC-SC19-2023/GN-WP-1.*

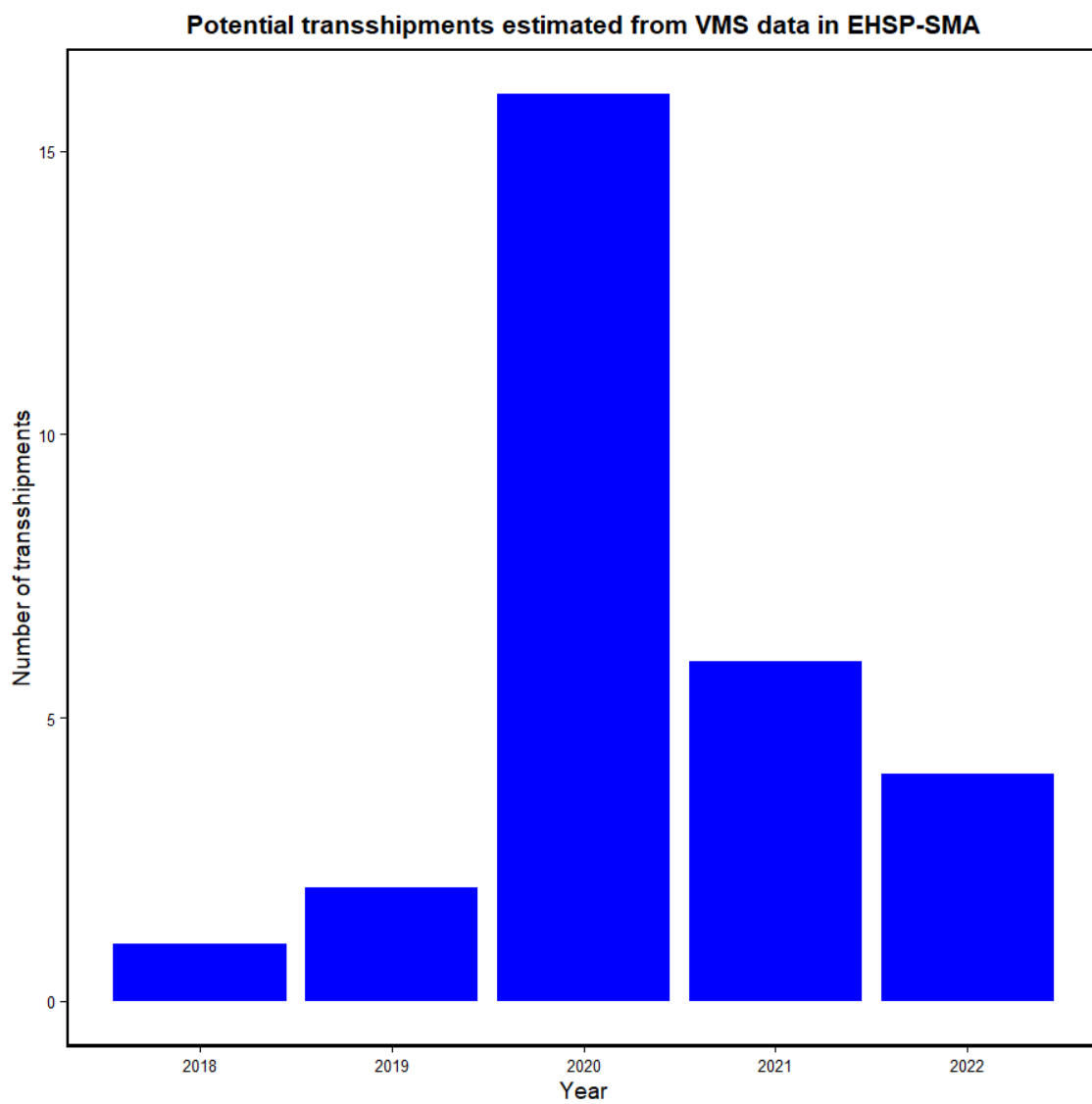


Figure 6: The number of potential transshipment events estimated through VMS analysis of vessels in close proximity in the EHSP-SMA.

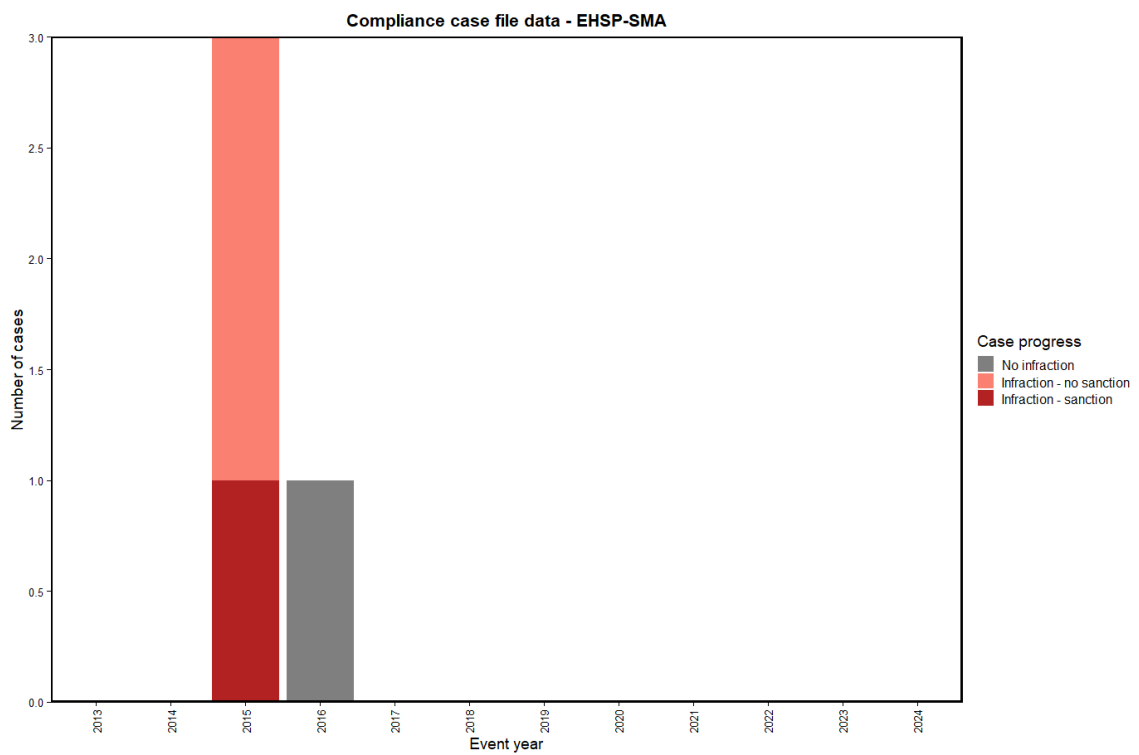


Figure 7: The outcomes of four compliance cases under CMM 2016-02 02.

Compliance monitoring report outcome - EHSP-SMA

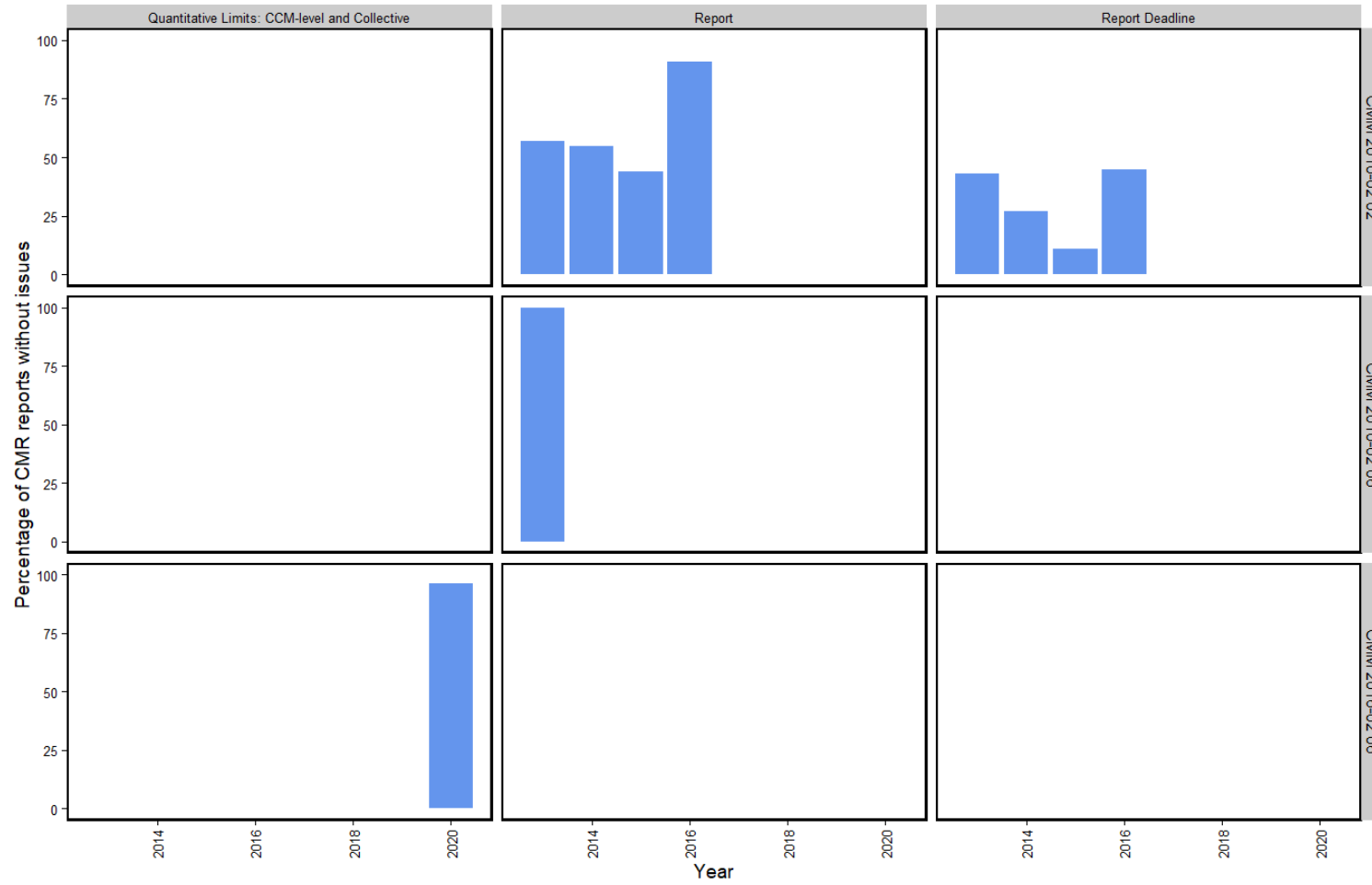


Figure 8: CMR Compliance Score relating to eastern high seas pocket related requirements over the years it was assessed.

Annex I

Table AI - 1: Summary of entry and exit alerts within the EHSP-SMA generated by the Commission VMS by flag from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2023 (includes transiting vessels).

Year	CCM	Vessel type	Number of vessels on VMS	Reported entry alerts	Reported exit alerts
2020	Cook Islands	Bunker	2	2	2
	China	Fish carrier	1	2	2
		Longliner	29	38	38
	Panama	Bunker	3	4	4
		Fish carrier	1	1	1
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	56	101	101
	United States of America	Pole and line	1	2	2
		Purse seiner	3	3	3
2021	Cook Islands	Bunker	1	6	6
	China	Longliner	18	19	19
	EU-Netherlands	Fish carrier	1	1	1
	Panama	Bunker	1	3	3
		Fish carrier	2	2	2
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	39	56	56
	United States of America	Purse seiner	2	2	2
2022	Cook Islands	Bunker	2	2	2
		Purse seiner	1	3	3
	China	Longliner	12	12	12
	EU-Spain	Purse seiner	2	2	2
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	38	59	59
	United States of America	Purse seiner	2	2	2
	Vanuatu	Longliner	3	7	7
2023	Cook Islands	Purse seiner	1	1	1
	China	Fish carrier	2	3	3
		Longliner	34	54	54
	EU-Spain	Purse seiner	1	1	1
	Korea (Republic of)	Bunker	1	1	1
		Fish carrier	1	1	1
	Panama	Bunker	1	1	1
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	50	133	133
	United States of America	Purse seiner	4	5	5
	Vanuatu	Bunker	1	1	1
Longliner		1	1	1	

Annex II

Table AII - 1: Complete list of all vessels within the EHSP-SMA reporting to WCPFC VMS in 2023 (includes transiting vessels).

Flag	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
Cook Islands	9565	JEANNINE	E5U3579	Purse seiner
China	11612	PINGTAIRONGLENG1	BZW8K	Fish carrier
	12154	PINGTAIRONGLENG6	BZW6K	Fish carrier
	11995	SUIYUANYU38	BZWA22	Longliner
	11996	SUIYUANYU40	BZWA28	Longliner
	10405	RONGHENG41	BZXD74	Longliner
	10150	PINGTAIRONG25	BZ3VT	Longliner
	10149	PINGTAIRONG19	BZ2VT	Longliner
	10151	PINGTAIRONG29	BZ4VT	Longliner
	11997	SUIYUANYU39	BZWA25	Longliner
	11156	GUANG YUAN YU 339	BZWY48	Longliner
	11782	GUANG YUAN YU 336	BZXF8	Longliner
	11703	ZHOU YUAN YU 2606	BZUR4	Longliner
	11890	YUANYOU818	BZU1R	Longliner
	11892	YUANYOU518	BZU6Q	Longliner
	11751	SUIYUANYU35	BZXE8	Longliner
	11025	SUIYUANYU30	BZWA32	Longliner
	9795	SUNSTAR 7	BZTY2	Longliner
	11750	SUIYUANYU33	BZXE7	Longliner
	11752	SUIYUANYU36	BZXE9	Longliner
	11026	SUIYUANYU31	BZWA33	Longliner
	11027	SUIYUANYU32	BZWA34	Longliner
	12038	DONG YU 1536	BZW2V	Longliner
	10408	ZHONG YANG 29	BZXD77	Longliner
	11395	ZHONGYANG22	BZW1B	Longliner
	12037	DONG YU 1535	BZW1V	Longliner
	12039	DONG YU 1537	BZW3V	Longliner
	10293	XIN SHI JI 202	BZ2VS	Longliner
	10294	XIN SHI JI 203	BZ3VS	Longliner
	10705	HUA NAN YU 738	BZXD37	Longliner

Table All:1 Continued:

Flag	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
China	10646	HUA NAN YU 732	BZXD34	Longliner
	10120	GUI YUAN YU 60005	BZWZ35	Longliner
	10358	RONG DA YANG 18	BBGA6	Longliner
	10886	XIN SHI JI 215	BZ2VY	Longliner
	10696	HONG YANG 11	BZU4B	Longliner
	10615	LU RONG YUAN YU 56	BBZN6	Longliner
	10616	LU RONG YUAN YU 57	BBZN7	Longliner
	10408	ZHONGYANG29	BZXD77	Longliner
EU-Spain	5259	MAR DE SERGIO	EHNB	Purse seiner
Korea (Republic of)	12164	SAMBONG HERA	D7EC	Bunker
	10719	M/V MONONOK	DSRO8	Fish carrier
Panama	12075	CONCORD EXPRESS	3E3373	Bunker
Chinese Taipei	3881	CHIN YOU MING	BI2576	Longliner
	5215	MAN YI FENG NO.66	BJ4932	Longliner
	10679	CHI HONG NO.899	BH3418	Longliner
	8806	LIAN JI FA NO.212	BJ4974	Longliner
	5351	LIEN CHI FA NO.98	BJ4877	Longliner
	10591	CHI HSIANG NO.889	BH3417	Longliner
	11775	CHI FA NO.1888	BH3495	Longliner
	11419	CHI WIN NO.1688	BH3471	Longliner
	12115	YI RONG NO.268	BH3528	Longliner
	9888	YU FENG NO.513	BG3695	Longliner
	5025	SHIN JAAN SHIN NO.368	BJ4976	Longliner
	9703	MAAN YU FENG NO.3	BJ5009	Longliner
	3799	YU FENG NO.128	BJ4752	Longliner
	3870	CHUAN HSIANG NO.866	BJ4842	Longliner
	9743	CHING CHENG FU NO.66	BJ5032	Longliner
	5363	CHUAN FA SHIAN NO.88	BJ4910	Longliner
	3872	CHUAN SHYANG NO.98	BJ4844	Longliner
	5408	MAAN YIH FENG NO.166	BG3830	Longliner

Table All:1 Continued:

Flag	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
Chinese Taipei	8820	CHUAN HSIN NO.128	BJ4969	Longliner
	3333	MAN FU LONG	BJ3721	Longliner
	3849	SHIN JAAN SHIN	BG3817	Longliner
	5406	YU LONG FA NO.36	BJ4931	Longliner
	3704	MAAN YIH FENG NO.16	BJ4590	Longliner
	3771	FU LONG SHUN	BJ4704	Longliner
	5380	YU LONG FA NO.168	BG3792	Longliner
	3697	LI CHENG NO.28	BJ4581	Longliner
	3717	LI HUNG NO.868	BJ4612	Longliner
	10156	CHUAN SHYANG NO.22	BG3811	Longliner
	5337	YU LONG FA NO.22	BG3850	Longliner
	3780	MAAN YIH FENG NO.26	BJ4719	Longliner
	3810	YU FENG NO.33	BG3807	Longliner
	3846	CHUAN HSIANG NO.368	BJ4814	Longliner
	3871	LI HUNG NO.666	BJ4843	Longliner
	4541	JIN SING SHYANG NO.11	BG3820	Longliner
	9782	TE YUN NO.16	BJ5035	Longliner
	8801	SHIN JAAN SHIN NO.7	BG3848	Longliner
	9396	HONG XIN NO.112	BG3818	Longliner
	3824	CHU HUAI NO.668	BG3786	Longliner
	3663	MAN FU TSAI NO.11	BG3795	Longliner
	5353	MAN FU TSAI NO.88	BJ4881	Longliner
	3043	MAN FU TSAI NO.9	BJ2058	Longliner
	3496	TENN FA LI NO.8	BG3823	Longliner
	8876	MAN FU TSAI NO.168	BG3825	Longliner
	4607	MAN YING CAI NO.6	BJ5013	Longliner
	10933	MAN FU TSAI NO.5	BJ5110	Longliner
	5219	YOU FU	BJ4947	Longliner
	3798	YI RONG NO.16	BJ4751	Longliner
	9688	MAAN YIH FENG NO.366	BG3681	Longliner
	3692	YU FENG NO.13	BG3796	Longliner
	3246	MAAN YU FENG NO.368	BG3805	Longliner
United States of America	4610	FRIESLAND	WDE6789	Purse seiner
	11446	EVELINA DA ROSA	WDI8477	Purse seiner
	4111	CAPE FINISTERRE	WDA4699	Purse seiner
	8725	CAPE COD	WDD5547	Purse seiner
Vanuatu	11903	ANGEL 106	YJXQ7	Bunker
	8715	Longbow NO.7	YJRT7	Longliner