



**TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

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**Annual Report on High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) Scheme**

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9 September 2024

Submitted by the Secretariat

**Version History**

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## Purpose

1. This paper summarises High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) activities for 2023.

## Introduction

2. WCPFC3 adopted CMM 2006-08 Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Boarding and Inspection Procedures in 2006 to ensure compliance with conservation and management measures on the high seas. Since that time, the Commission has endorsed several procedural specifications. These specifications enable boarding and inspections of fishing vessels on the high seas in the Convention Area by authorised inspectors from authorised inspection vessels and set requirements such as for inspection flags and pennants, and the [Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels](#).
3. [Summary information on HSBI](#) has been available on the WCPFC website since early 2019.
4. The [list of vessels previously inspected](#) under HSBI has been available on a secure WCPFC webpage since 2018.

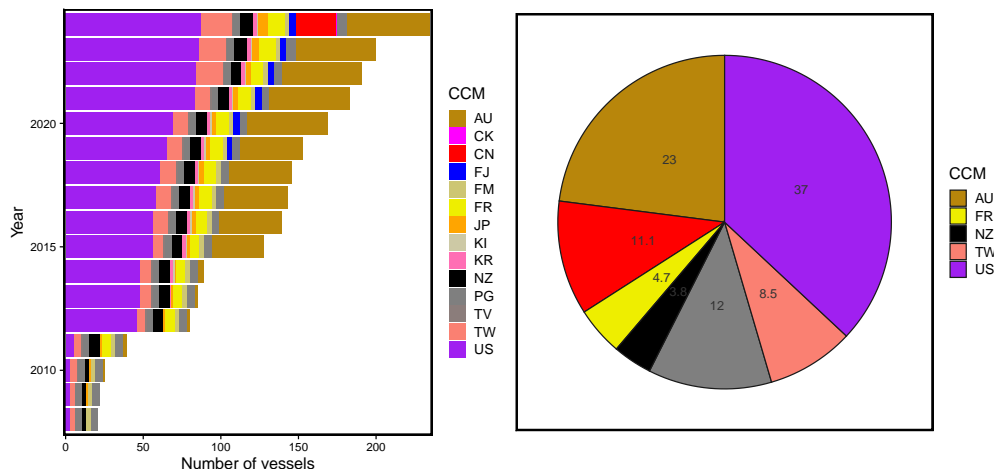
## Members authorised for HSBI

5. Fourteen members have notified the Commission of their intention to participate in HSBI activities in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2023 (Table 1). In 2024, this number increased to fifteen.

**Table 1:** Members that have notified of their intent to conduct high seas boardings and inspections and number of inspection vessels (to 3 April 2024). Separate notifications were provided by France for French Authorities that are based in French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

CCM	Year notification received	WCPFC notifications received (CMM 2006-08 06)	No. of Active Vessels on the Register of Authorised Inspection Vessel
Australia	2010	YES	54
Canada	2008		6
Cook Islands	2023	YES	1
China	2024		26
Federated States of Micronesia	2008		3
Fiji	2019		4
France	2011		11
Japan	2009	YES	6
Kiribati	2014		1
Korea (Republic of)	2013		2
New Zealand	2008	YES	9
Papua New Guinea	2008		4
Chinese Taipei	2008		20
Tuvalu	2010	N/A	1
United States of America	2008	YES	87

6. In 2023, Canada, the Cook Islands, France, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States made updates to the [Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels](#) that were notified to CCMs in Circulars released in 2023 and 2024. Up to 30 June 2024, CCMs were notified of updates by Australia and the United States. On 1 May 2024, CCMs were notified that China intended to participate in HSBI.
7. Collectively, as of June 2024, the participating members had 236 vessels with “Active” status on the WCPFC [Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels](#) (Figure 1). There were three deletions and nine newly listed inspection vessels with a date of effect in 2023. In 2024, there were 33 deletions and 32 newly listed vessels.

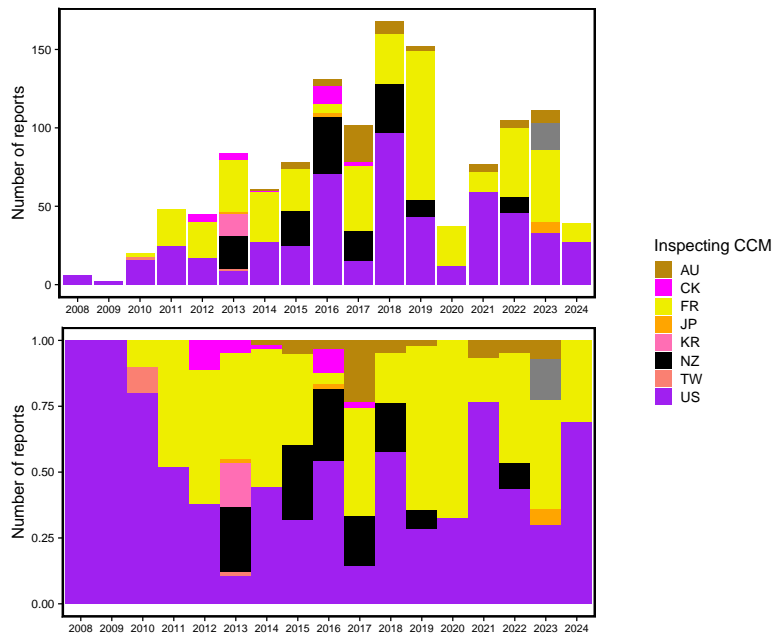


**Figure 1:** Number of active registered inspection vessels by year (left), and number and percentage of inspection vessels by CCM on the WCPFC Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels in 2023 (right).

## Review of HSBI activities

### Number and locations of HSBI events in the Convention Area

8. Between 2008 and 2019, there was an overall increase in boarding and inspections with 123 HSBI conducted in 2018, and 112 HSBI conducted in 2019 as is reflected in the number of HSBI reports received (Figure 2, and see more detail in Appendix A). There was a clear drop in activity to 35 inspections during 2020, when COVID-19 posed potential health risks to all those involved. Since that time, there has been a progressive increase to 101 HSBI in 2022, and 87 HSBI in 2023. Overall, at their lowest points, the number of HSBI events in 2020 averaged 43% of the 2018 and 2019 levels of inspections.
9. The circumstances during COVID-19 placed emphasis on other forms of monitoring compliance such as AIS and VMS, aerial surveillance, and the trialing of emerging technologies along with greater analysis of available data and information. The progressive increase in the number of CCMs developing port State related measures (whether signatories to the UN Port State Measures Agreement or not) has also increased opportunities for the sharing of information from wider sources which would improve the effectiveness of compliance monitoring.



**Figure 2:** The number of HSBI reports (top) and proportion of reports (bottom) by Inspecting CCMs between 2008 and 2024 (numbers for 2024 are incomplete).

10. Inspecting CCMs provided the required notification of intent to board, completion of boarding and/or final boarding reports. Some HSBI continue to be reported as interrogations, indicating inspecting parties did not board or only boarded if there was some indication an inspection was warranted (see Appendix B, Figure B-1 for the number of inspection reports from each inspecting CCM and the flag CMM of the vessels inspected these reports relate to). Although there were fewer active inspecting CCMs in 2020 and 2021, numbers subsequently increased again and are currently close to pre-COVID levels (see Appendix C, Figure C-1).
11. Data for vessel types showed that between 90 and 100% of the vessels inspected over the past five years were longliners (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** Number of vessels inspected by vessel type for each year from 2020 to 2024.

Year	Fish Carrier	Longliner	Pole and line	Purse seiner	Support vessel	Total inspected
2020		34				34
2021	2	53			1	56
2022	3	79	2	3		87
2023	1	79		3	3	86
2024	2	32		1	2	37

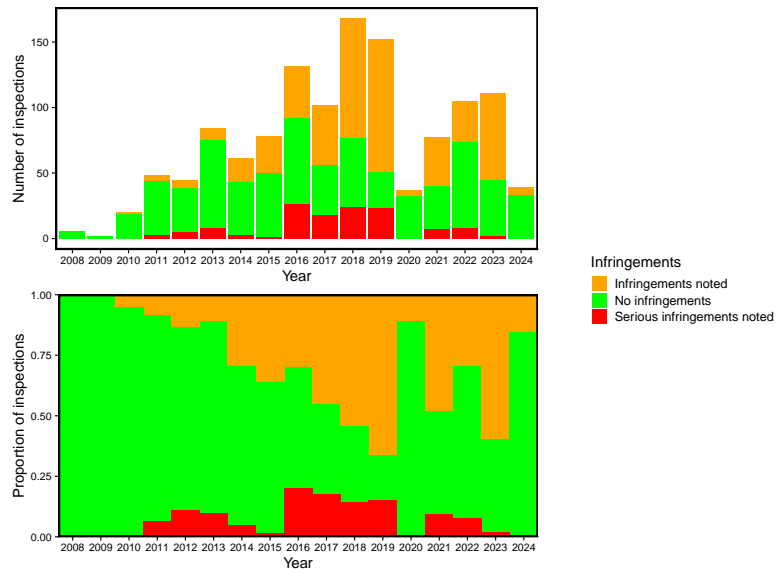
12. Considering the number of vessels that were recorded with "Fished" status in the WCPFC Convention Area and the number of vessels inspected by flag from 2018 to 2023, the highest proportion of vessels inspected were inspected in 2018 (see Appendix A, Table A-1). The highest number of inspections in 2018 were on Chinese Taipei vessels. Across all years, Chinese Taipei

had high numbers of inspections and a high proportion of vessels inspected (over 6% in most years). Korea and China had the next highest number and proportion of vessels inspected. Because these countries have the highest number of vessels on the Record of Fishing Vessels, the likelihood of inspection is higher.

13. Longline fishing effort and the location of boardings and inspections since 2008 were distributed throughout the WCPFC area (see Appendix D, Figures D-1 and D-2).

#### Outcomes of HSBI activities including cases in the Compliance Case File System

14. HSBI activities undertaken by WCPFC members assist flag CCMs to monitor their vessels compliance; it also highlights where further support may reduce the likelihood of future non-compliance (see information on infringement types in the following tables Appendix E, Tables E-1 to E-3).
15. The proportion of HSBI events that resulted in Article 25 (2) case files being created by the Secretariat was significantly reduced in 2020 and 2021 (see Appendix F, Figures F-1 and F-2). Most inspections in 2020 were 'interrogations' that did not involve boardings. Boardings resumed in 2021 with a more limited scope to reduce the time of contact between crew and the boarding party as part of revised health protocols.
16. Since 2020, there has been a significant reduction in inspections with a corresponding reduction in alleged infringements (Figure 3). Further analysis will be possible in future years to assess any change in trends before, during, and after the COVID-19 affected years. However, it is clear that inspections between 2020 and 2023 have, on average, resulted in fewer alleged infringements (see more information in Figure F-1 that summarises the number, status and, where completed, the outcome of cases by theme between 2013 and 2023; information on the specific CMMs associated with those cases is provided in Figure F-2).
17. The majority of inspections did not result in the detection of any alleged infringements. This information is also shown by the flag CCM of the inspected vessel (Figure G-1) and inspecting CCM (Figure G-2).
18. The Compliance Case File System (CCFS) Article 25(2) list contains records of HSBI events that resulted in a request for flag State investigation pursuant to Article 25(2) of the Convention. Until March 2023, one boarding and inspection event could reflect one or more alleged infringements in a single case file in CCFS.
19. Since the release of the upgraded CCFS in March 2023, the alleged infringements of each obligation in a single inspection event appear as individual cases.
20. Relevant documentation associated with each case is only accessible to those CCMs with an interest in the case as the inspecting CCM and flag CCM and, where relevant, by the coastal State and Regional Observer Programme.
21. The number of cases of alleged infringements arising from HSBI between 2008 and 2023 is shown in Table E-2 and Table E-3. Shown are also whether cases are still under investigation and, if completed, the outcome of the investigation. Figure F-1 and Figure F-2 provide more detail on the specific obligations and the outcomes of investigations of alleged CMM infringements



**Figure 3:** Number (top) and proportion (proportion) of potential infringements HSBI events that resulted in reports of potential infringements.

identified in HSBI reports pursuant to Article 25(2) between 2013 and 2023 and between 2016 and 2023, respectively.

22. Several alleged infringements in 2021 and 2023 are still under investigation although there may be case updates that are yet to be reviewed by the Secretariat.

#### CCM feedback on HSBI operational outcomes

23. Some CCMs shared findings from their operational MCS activities with the Secretariat (some of this information is reflected in the alleged infringements in CCFS as shown in Figures F-1 and F-2). However, there are additional insights on issues that currently may not result in the generation of a case file which, in 2022 and 2023 included:
  - a) vessel markings were non-compliant or may have been obscured;
  - b) tori lines for mitigating seabird capture were regularly non-compliant and rarely used;
  - c) there were no de-hookers on board to help reduce the risk of injury to turtles during their release;
  - d) breaches of storage of retained shark carcasses and fins affecting inspections and catch reports not reflecting crew statements of sharks caught and released;
  - e) suspected under-reporting of catch;
  - f) crew, captain, and/or vessel owner information inconsistent with the Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV);
  - g) no incinerators present but little garbage on board; and
  - h) poor crew/labour conditions.



24. These issues are not quantified; however, these reports assist in highlighting:
- a) possible issues that can undermine the objective of a CMM;
  - b) process issues that require CCMs to ensure up to data, e.g., on the RFV; or
  - c) the potential need for CMM review or the need to refresh some operators awareness of their obligations.

## CCMs reporting on implementation of CMM 2006-08

### Reporting through Annual Report Part 2

25. The most recent reporting was through Annual Report Part 2 covering 2023 activities.<sup>1</sup> This reporting by CCMs supports a review of the completeness of their reporting of HSBI activities (see Appendix H, Figure H-1).

### Review of implementation by applicable CCMs under the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) RY2013 - 2015

26. Implementation reviews give an overview of the outcome of the evaluation of CMM 2006-08 under the CMS over the years they have been assessed. The general trend is for improved implementation of the required reporting by applicable CCMs, with most obligations fully implemented by RY2015.

### Secretariat comment

27. As reported to TCC20<sup>2</sup>, the Secretariat will document the HSBI process as part of its Helpdesk.
28. The Secretariat will continue to offer and support planned HSBI training for CCMs to provide information on Commission processes and systems.
29. CCMs are reminded to update their authorities of fishing vessels in the CCMs official contact details through the secure page of the website at <https://www.wcpfc.int/official-contacts>. This will ensure HSBI related reports can be provided directly to the correct flag CCM contacts.
30. During 2024, the Secretariat will develop an online facility to support HSBI related documentation and notifications as well as the Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels. This work is necessary to continue to move existing systems from older platforms. Further information will be provided to CCMs as this work progresses.
31. The Secretariat has received feedback that the questionnaires aimed at facilitating communications between the Inspecting CCM and vessel crew when initiating and completing a boarding are now out of date. Questionnaires do not address factors that are the core focus of any one inspection. The Secretariat will contact Inspecting CCMs in 2024 to seek advice on the nature of any updates required.

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<sup>1</sup>CCMs can view these responses by logging into the Monitoring and Evaluation webpage Reporting facility (<https://cmm.wcpfc.int/reporting/0>)

<sup>2</sup>See TCC20-2024-27 Supporting CCMs with Technical and Compliance Matters

## Appendix A: Number of Vessels Inspected

**Table A-1:** Number of vessels that "Fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2018 to 2023.

Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
Australia	2018	8		
	2019	3		
	2020	4		
	2021	7		
	2022	9		
	2023	15		
Canada	2021	1		
China	2018	365		
	2019	386		
	2020	375	12	3.20
	2021	365	4	1.10
	2022	367	35	9.54
	2023	355	25	7.04
Cook Islands	2018	15		
	2019	19		
	2020	19		
	2021	18		
	2022	14	1	7.14
	2023	8		
Curacao	2020	1		
	2021	1		
EU-Spain	2018	5		
	2019	5		
	2020	5		
	2021	10		
	2022	10		
	2023	12		
Ecuador	2018	4		
	2019	5		
	2020	5		
	2021	5		
	2022	5	1	20.00
	2023	5		
El Salvador	2018	2		
	2019	2		
	2020	2		
	2021	2		
	2022	2	1	50.00
	2023	2		

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**Table A-1:** Number of vessels that "Fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2018 to 2023 (Continued).

Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
Federated States of Micronesia	2018	41		
	2019	40		
	2020	42		
	2021	45		
	2022	41	1	2.44
	2023	41		
Fiji	2018	39		
	2019	36		
	2020	34		
	2021	23		
	2022	15		
	2023	19	6	31.58
Japan	2018	552		
	2019	548		
	2020	440		
	2021	499	9	1.80
	2022	391	4	1.02
	2023	385	1	0.26
Kiribati	2018	18		
	2019	14		
	2020	12		
	2021	13		
	2022	17		
	2023	14		
Korea (Republic of)	2018	156		
	2019	158		
	2020	159	4	2.52
	2021	149	4	2.68
	2022	144	4	2.78
	2023	148	4	2.70
Liberia	2018	4		
	2019	3		
	2020	2		
Marshall Islands	2018	14		
	2019	16		
	2020	15		
	2021	16		
	2022	13		
	2023	13		

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**Table A-1:** Number of vessels that "Fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2018 to 2023 (Continued).

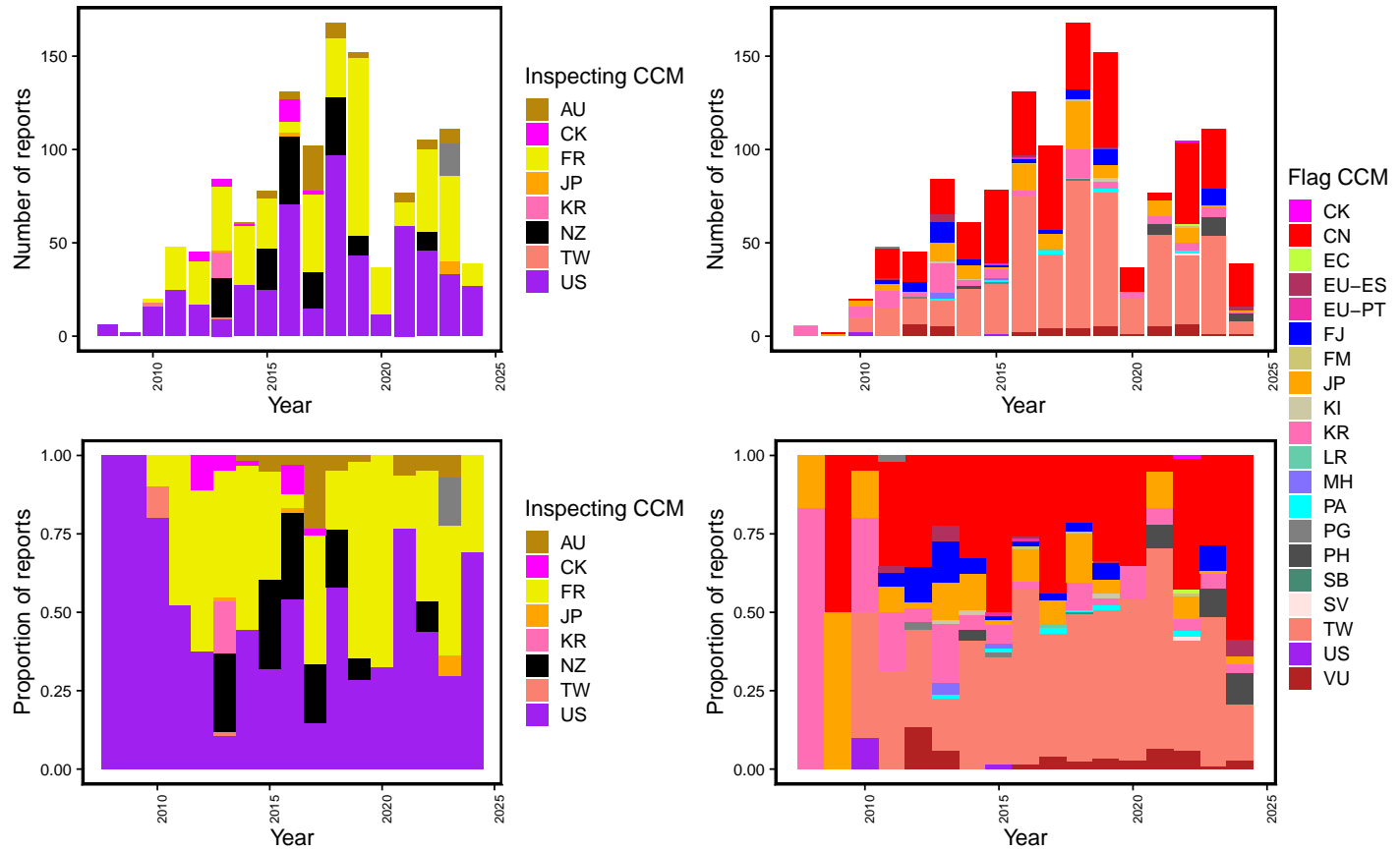
Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
Nauru	2018	2		
	2019	11		
	2020	16		
	2021	15		
	2022	20		
	2023	24		
New Caledonia	2018	3		
New Zealand	2018	2		
	2019	4		
	2020	2		
	2021	3		
	2022	1		
	2023	3		
Panama	2018	58		
	2019	87		
	2020	84		
	2021	95		
	2022	89	2	2.25
	2023	80		
Papua New Guinea	2018	27		
	2019	24		
	2020	17		
	2021	13		
	2022	4		
Philippines	2018	292		
	2019	306		
	2020	262		
	2021	286	2	0.70
	2022	164		
	2023	243	7	2.88
Solomon Islands	2018	5		
	2019	5		
	2020	3		
	2021	3		
	2022	3		
	2023	9		
Chinese Taipei	2018	651		
	2019	646		
	2020	607	17	2.80
	2021	497	34	6.84
	2022	505	33	6.53
	2023	504	42	8.33

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**Table A-1:** Number of vessels that "Fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2018 to 2023 (Continued).

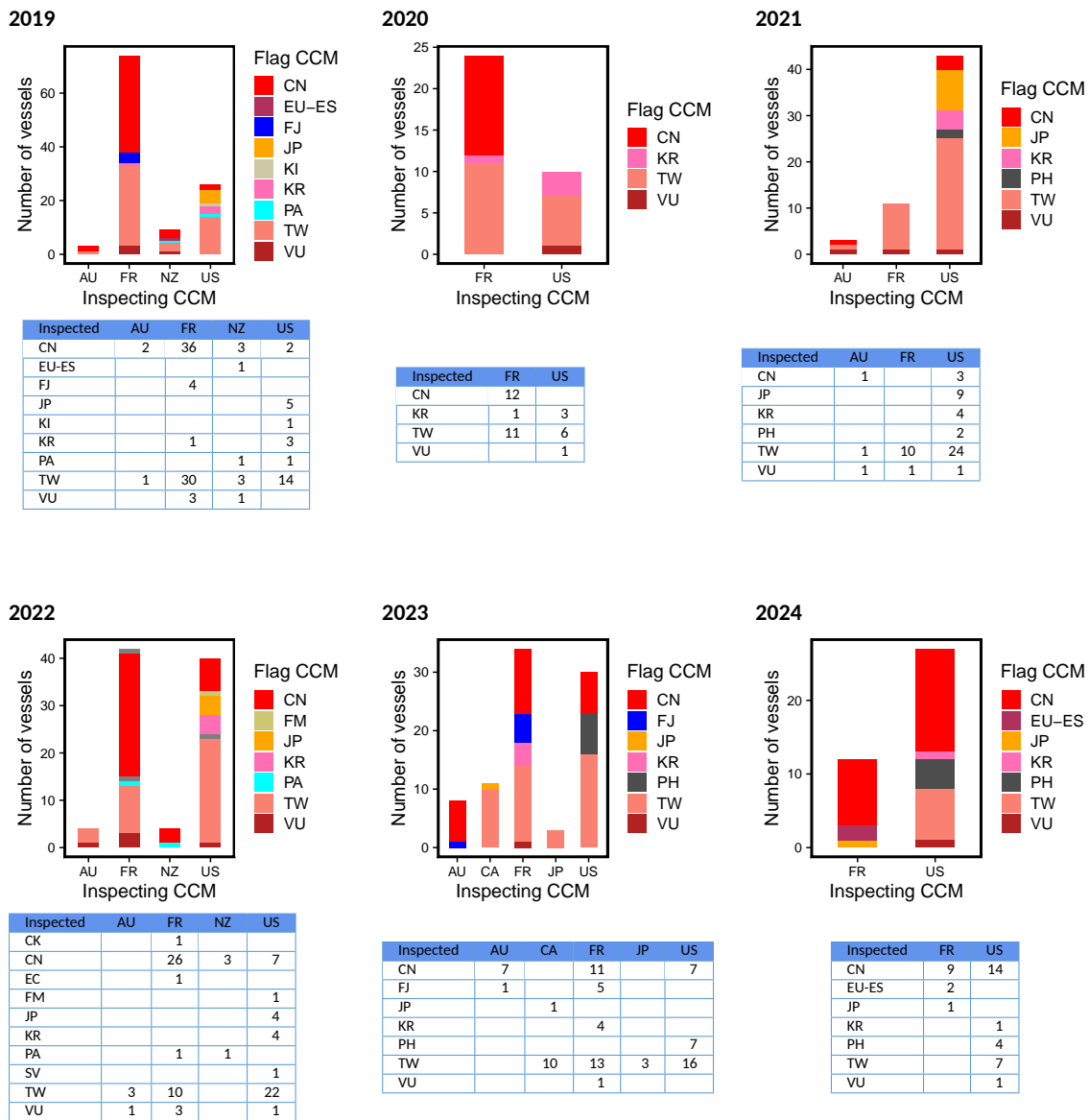
Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
Tuvalu	2018	3		
	2019	2		
	2020	4		
	2021	7		
	2022	7		
	2023	7		
United States of America	2018	187		
	2019	183		
	2020	183		
	2021	182		
	2022	173		
	2023	168		
Vanuatu	2018	71		
	2019	73		
	2020	71	1	1.41
	2021	66	3	4.55
	2022	62	5	8.06
	2023	64	1	1.56

## Appendix B: Inspection Reports



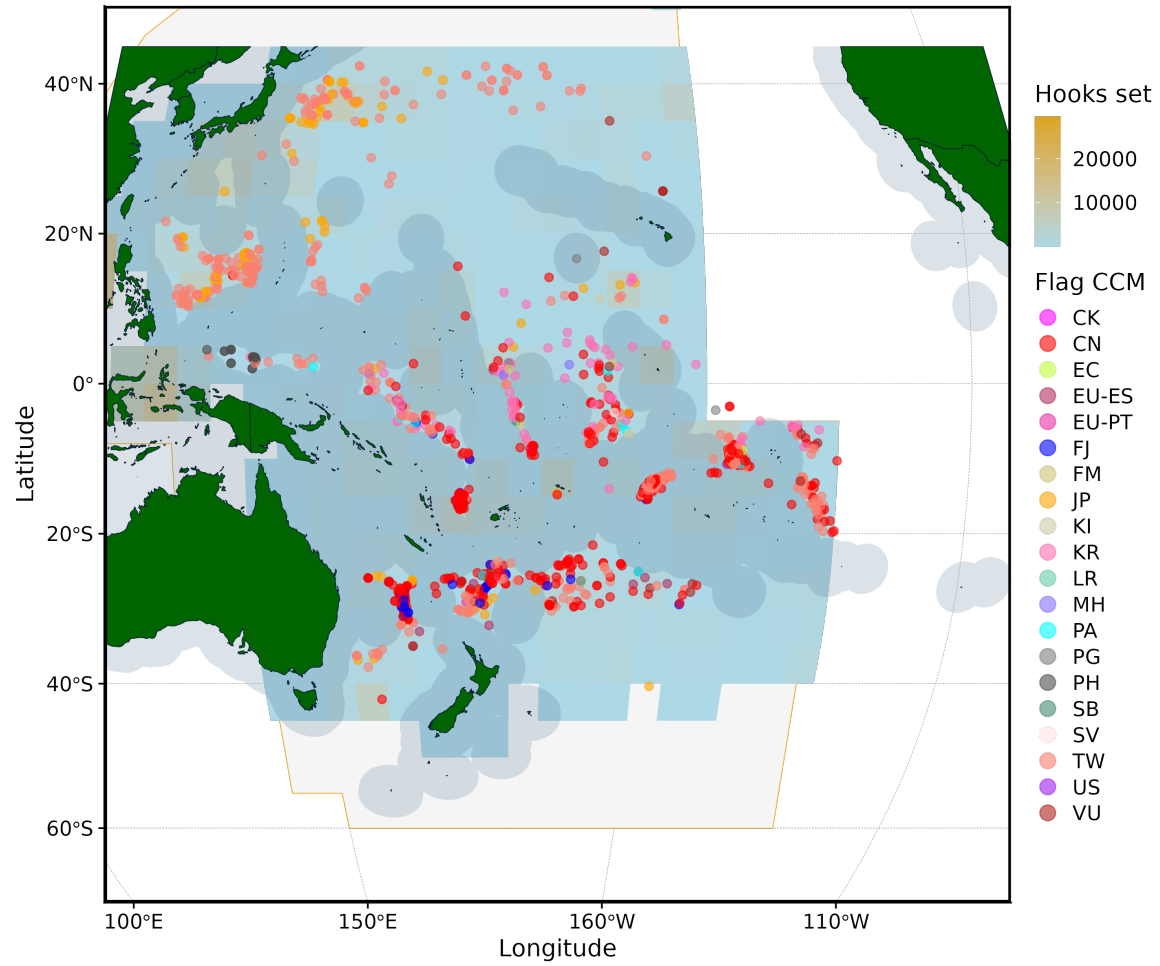
**Figure B-1:** The number of inspection reports received (top) and the proportion of boarding reports (bottom) by inspecting CCM (left) and by the flag of the inspected vessel (right).

## Appendix C: Inspection Report Number Summary



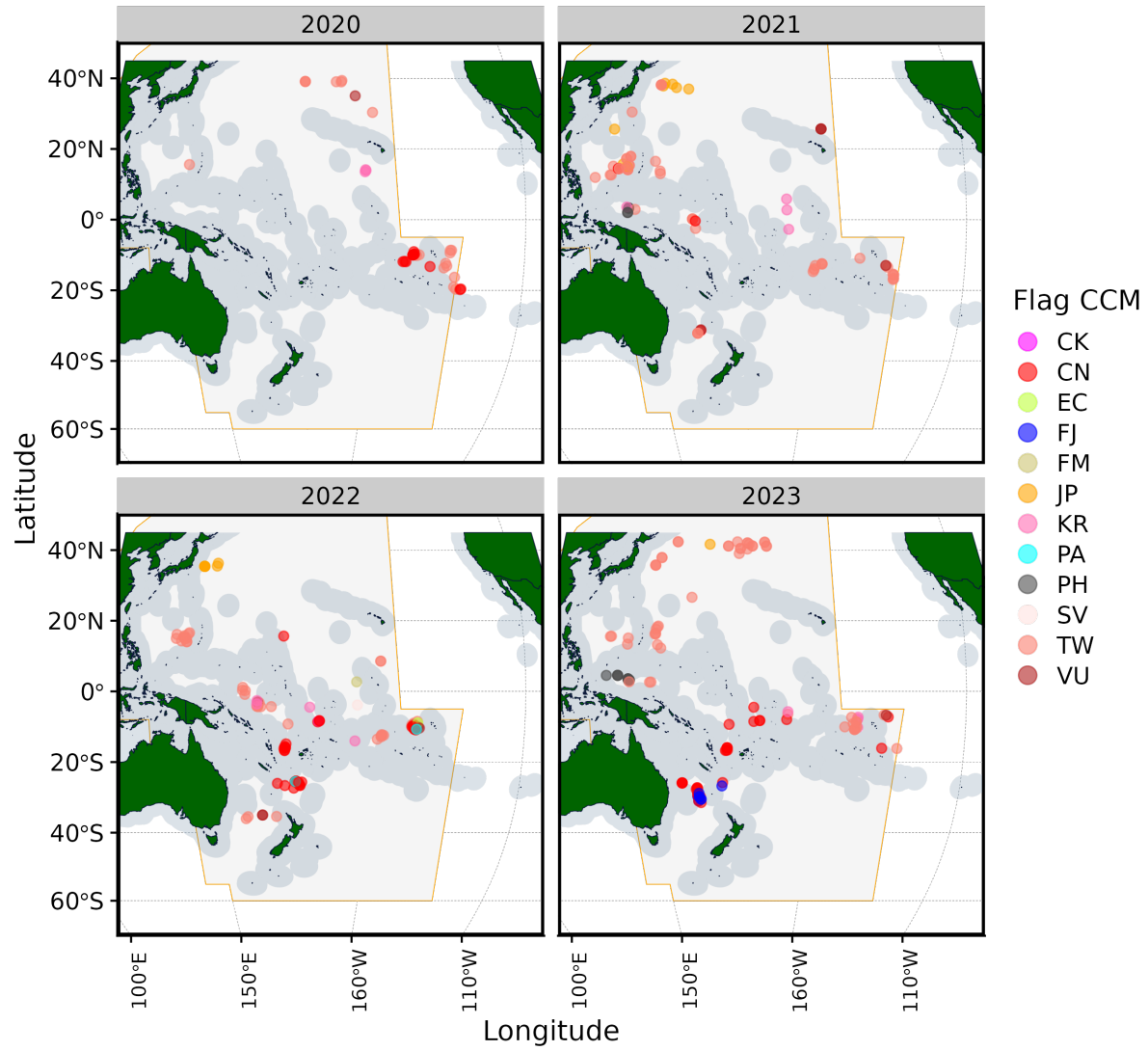
**Figure C-1:** Summary of the number of inspection reports received from each inspecting CCM and the flag CCM of the vessel inspected for each year in 2019 and 2024

## Appendix D: Location and Distribution of All Vessel Inspections



**Figure D-1:** Location of all High Seas Boarding and Inspections conducted in the Convention Area since 2008. Shading represents the averaged surface-longline fishing effort in hooks (1000s) from 2016 to 2023.





**Figure D-2:** Distribution of all High Seas Boarding and Inspections in the Convention Area from 2019 to 2023. Shading represents the averaged surface-longline fishing effort in hooks (1000s) for this time period.

## Appendix E: Information on Infringement Types

**Table E-1:** Information on number of infringements noted by vessel type from inspections between 2008 and 2023 in the WCPFC Convention area.

Vessel type	No infringements	Infringements noted	Serious infringements noted	Percent with no infringements	Percent with infringements noted	Total
Bunker	1	1	0	50.00	50.00	2
Fish carrier	12	7	5	50.00	50.00	24
Longliner	603	461	117	51.06	48.94	1181
Pole and line	13	4	0	76.47	23.53	17
Purse seiner	19	9	2	63.33	36.67	30
Support vessel	3	5	4	25.00	75.00	12

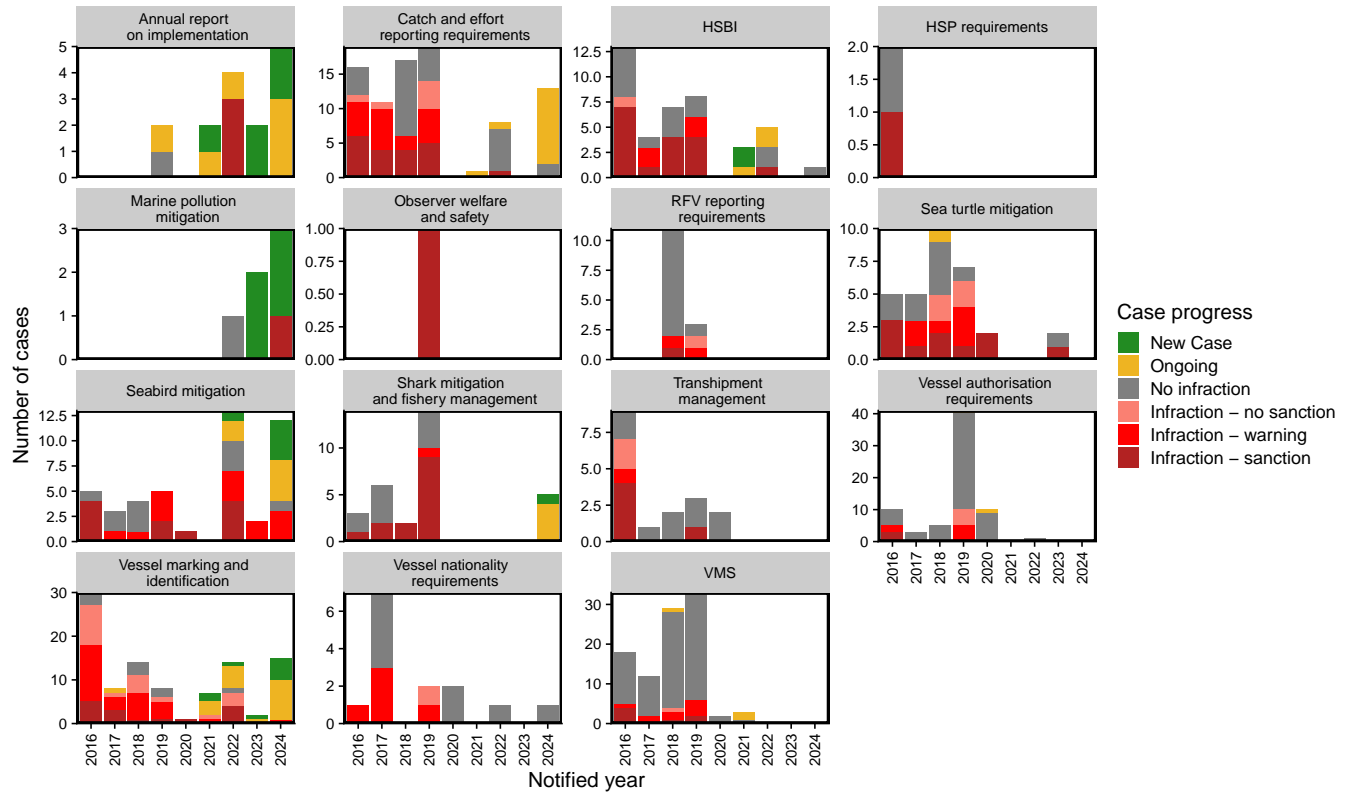
**Table E-2:** Information on number of infringements noted by boarding CCMs from inspections between 2008 and 2023 in the WCPFC Convention area.

Boarding vessel flag	No infringements	Infringements noted	Serious infringements noted	Percent with no infringements	Percent with infringements noted	Total
Australia	19	31	12	30.65	69.35	62
Canada	6	9	2	35.29	64.71	17
Cook Islands	12	12	0	50.00	50.00	24
France	205	232	19	44.96	55.04	456
Japan	3	7	0	30.00	70.00	10
Korea (Republic of)	14	0	0	100.00	0.00	14
New Zealand	67	78	5	44.67	55.33	150
Chinese Taipei	3	0	0	100.00	0.00	3
United States of America	322	118	90	60.75	39.25	530

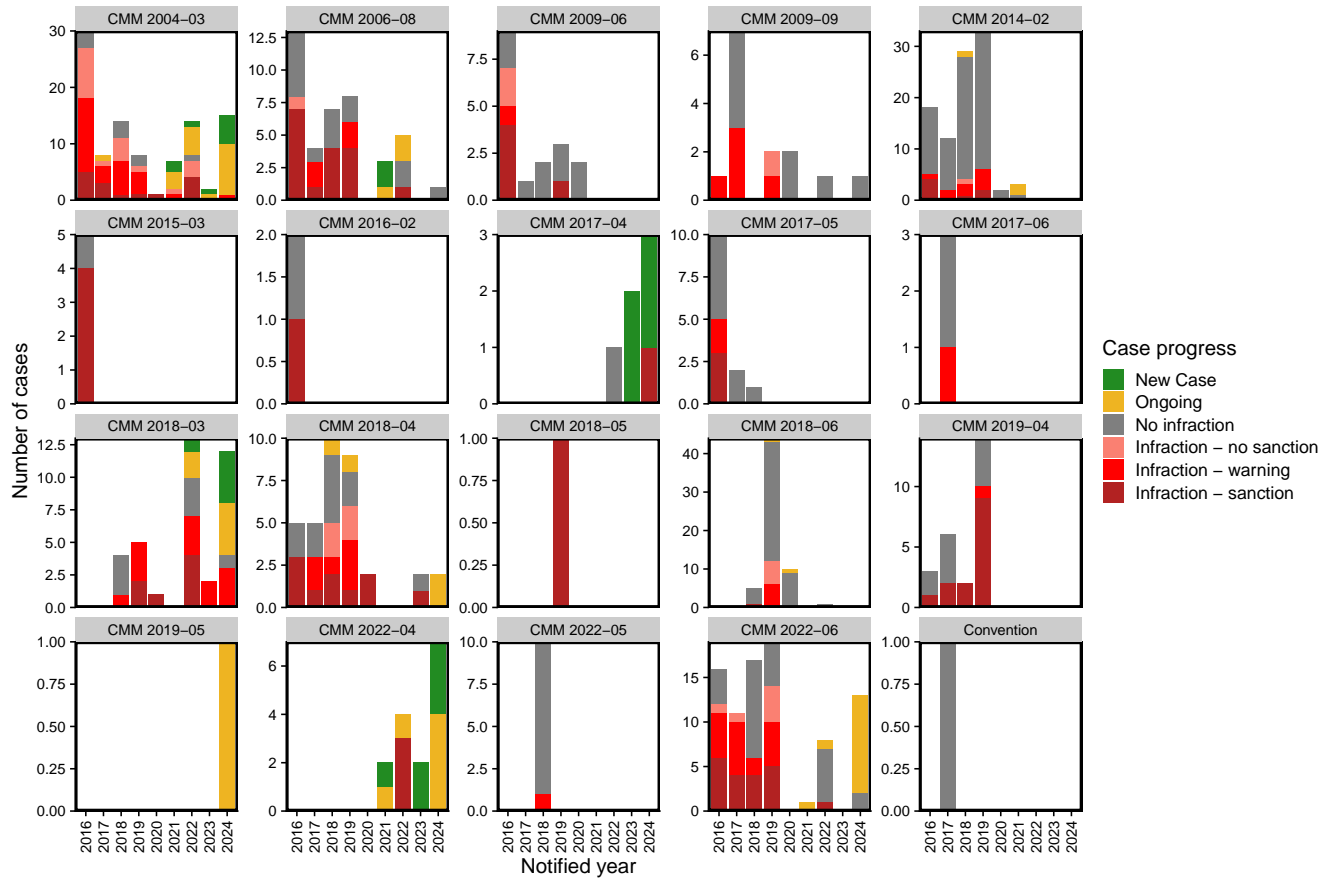
**Table E-3:** Information on number of infringements noted by Boarded Vessel CCM from inspections between 2008 and 2023 in the WCPFC Convention area. Zeros indicate that no infringements were noted during inspections.

Boarded vessel flag	No infringements	Infringements noted	Serious infringements noted	Percent with no infringements	Percent with infringements noted	Total
Belize	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
China	211	158	25	53.55	46.45	394
Cook Islands	0	1	0	0.00	100.00	1
EU-Portugal	2	0	0	100.00	0.00	2
EU-Spain	8	1	0	88.89	11.11	9
Ecuador	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
El Salvador	0	1	0	0.00	100.00	1
Federated States of Micronesia	3	0	0	100.00	0.00	3
Fiji	22	18	8	45.83	54.17	48
Japan	60	26	16	58.82	41.18	102
Kiribati	2	2	0	50.00	50.00	4
Korea (Republic of)	75	11	0	87.21	12.79	86
Liberia	0	1	0	0.00	100.00	1
Marshall Islands	2	0	2	50.00	50.00	4
Panama	8	1	0	88.89	11.11	9
Papua New Guinea	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
Philippines	5	13	4	22.73	77.27	22
Singapore	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
Solomon Islands	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
Chinese Taipei	230	233	69	43.23	56.77	532
United States of America	2	1	0	66.67	33.33	3
Vanuatu	16	20	4	40.00	60.00	40

## Appendix F: Compliance Case File System (CCFS) Data

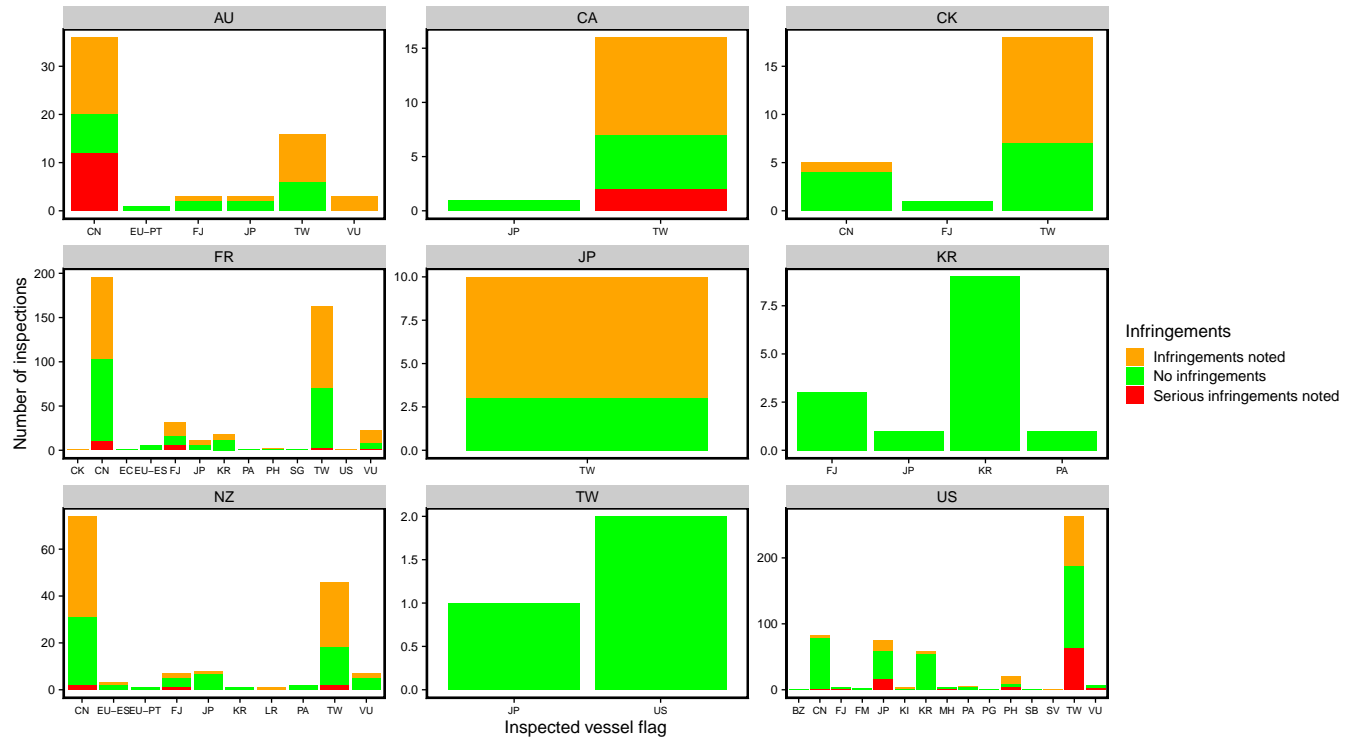


**Figure F-1:** Summary of the themes and number of cases relating to alleged infringements from HSBI between 2016 and 2024 and whether cases are still under investigation and, if completed, the outcome of the investigation.

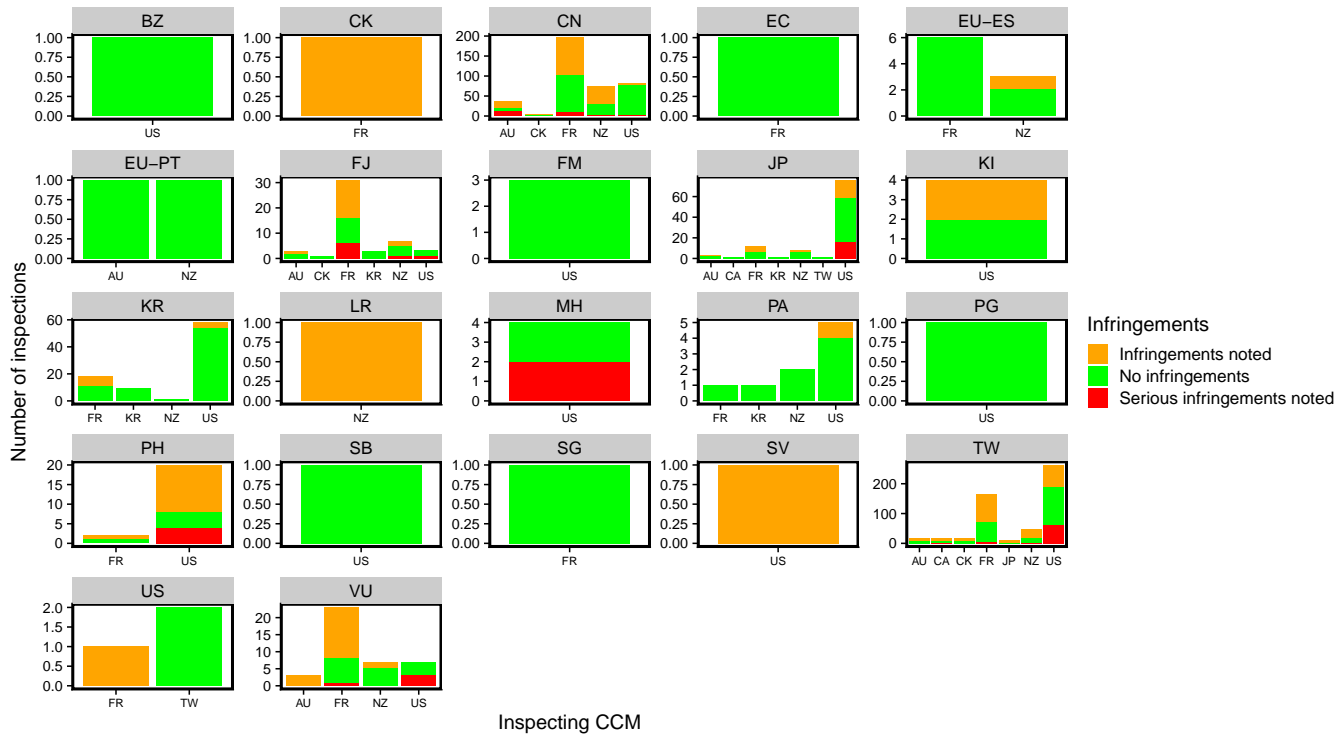


**Figure F-2:** Summary of the outcomes of investigations of specific obligations where there have been alleged infringements identified in HSBI reports that have resulted in a request for flag State investigation pursuant to Article 25(2) between 2016 and 2024.

## Appendix G: Alleged Infringements



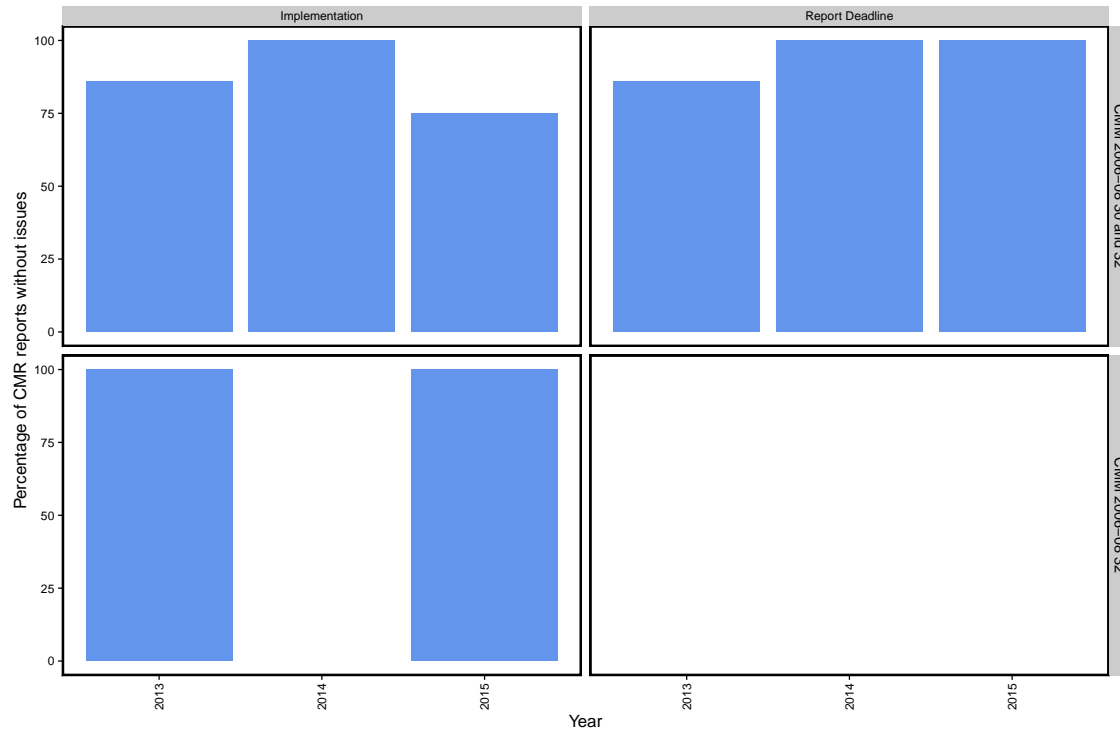
**Figure G-1:** High seas boarding and inspection information from 2008 to 2023, showing the number of alleged infringements detected by inspecting CCM on the flag CCM. (Note, these numbers do not reflect the number of vessels but rather the number of alleged infringements noted during an inspection.)



**Figure G-2:** High seas boarding and inspection information from 2008 to 2023, showing the number of alleged infringements detected on flag CCMs by inspecting CCM. (Note, these numbers do not reflect the number of vessels but rather the number of alleged infringements noted during an inspection.)



## Appendix H: Compliance Monitoring Report Outcome



**Figure H-1:** CMR Compliance Score relating to inspection activity related CMM obligations over the years it was assessed.