



**Intersessional Working Group
Regional Observer Programme
24-25th September**

**DRAFT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE
FOR THE REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME**

WCPFC\IWG-ROP\2007-04

The Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean;

Recalling Article 28(1) of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPF Convention) which requires the Commission to develop a regional observer programme to, among other things, collect verified catch data, and to monitor the implementation of the conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission;

Further recalling Article 28(7) of the WCPF Convention which requires the Commission to develop procedures and guidelines for the operation of the regional observer programme;

Adopts, in accordance with Article 10 of the WCPFC Convention the following Conservation and Management Measure for the establishment of the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (Commission ROP).

Establishment of the Commission ROP

1. There is hereby established the Commission ROP which shall be coordinated by the Secretariat of the Commission.
2. The Secretariat of the Commission shall provide an annual report to the Commission with regard to the Commission ROP and on other matters relevant to the efficient operation of the programme.

Objectives of the Commission ROP

3. The objectives of the Commission ROP shall be to collect verified catch data, other scientific data and additional information related to the fishery from the Convention Area and to monitor the implementation of the conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission.

Scope of the Commission ROP

4. The Commission ROP shall apply to the following categories of fishing vessels authorized to fish in the Convention Area in accordance with the Commission's Conservation and Management Measures 2004-01:

- i) vessels fishing exclusively on the high seas in the Convention Area; and
- ii) vessels fishing on the high seas and in waters under the jurisdiction of one or more coastal States and vessels fishing in the waters under the national jurisdiction of two or more coastal states.

Functions of Observers

5. The functions of observers operating under the Commission ROP shall include collecting catch data and other scientific data, monitoring the implementation of the conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission and any additional information related to the fishery that may be approved by the Commission. When a vessel is operating on the same fishing trip both in waters under the national jurisdiction of its flag State and in the adjacent high seas, an observer placed under the Commission ROP shall not undertake any of these functions without the consent of the flag State.

Obligations of Members of the Commission

6. Each member of the Commission shall ensure that fishing vessels fishing in the Convention Area, except for vessels that operate exclusively within waters under the national jurisdiction of the flag State, are prepared to accept an observer from the Commission ROP if required by the Commission.

Guiding Principles for Operation of the Commission ROP

7. The Commission ROP shall operate in accordance with the following principles:

- i). The Commission ROP shall consist of independent and impartial observers¹ authorized by the Secretariat of the Commission;
- ii). Vessels that operate principally in coastal waters, but occasionally venture on to the high seas, may carry observers of their own nationality² providing those observers have been authorized by the Secretariat.

¹ “independent and impartial Refer to WCPFC –TCC2 2006 Summary report para 54 (iv) “the need to ensure that observers are independent and impartial, in accordance with Article 28, noting that this requirement did not exclude national observers from operating on vessels of their flag State;”

² Refer to WCPFC –TCC2 2006 Summary report para 54 (ii) “the need to integrate existing national and regional observer programmes into the Commission programme and to allow CCMs to continue to deploy national observers on vessels that principally operate in coastal waters and that occasionally extend their fishing operations on to the high seas;”

iii). The Commission ROP shall be organized in a flexible manner which takes into account the nature of the fishery from the Convention Area and any other relevant factors the Commission may consider appropriate;

iv). To ensure cost effectiveness and to avoid duplication, the Commission's ROP shall be coordinated, to the maximum extent possible, with other regional, subregional and national observer programmes; and to this extent, the Commission may enter into contracts or appropriate arrangements for the provision of the regional observer programme and in relation to cost sharing and recovery, training of observers, authorization and deployment of observers

v) the Commission ROP shall provide a sufficient level of coverage as approved by the Commission to ensure that the Commission receives appropriate data and information on catch levels and any additional information related to the fisheries within the Convention Area, taking into account the characteristics of the fisheries

vi). Observers shall not unduly interfere with the lawful operations of the vessel and in carrying out their duties shall give due consideration to the operational requirements of the vessel and to the extent practicable minimize disruption to the operation of vessels fishing in the Convention Area; Observers shall comply with the Guidelines in **Annex A** - "Guidelines on the Rights and Responsibilities of Observers."

vii). The Commission ROP shall be operated to ensure that observers shall not be unduly obstructed in the discharge of their duties. To this extent, members of the Commission shall ensure that vessel operators comply with the guidelines in **Annex B** - "Guidelines on the Rights and Responsibilities of Vessel operators, Captains and Crew."

viii) The Commission ROP shall ensure the security and confidentiality of non-aggregated data and other information which the Commission deems to be of a confidential nature; the release of data and other information collected by the Commission ROP shall be in accordance with guidelines set out in the Commission's Rules and Procedures for Access to, and Dissemination of, Data Compiled by the Commission

Annex A

Guidelines on the Rights and Responsibilities of Observers:

In accordance with Annex 111 Article 3, and article 28 of the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. The following guidelines for the Rights and Responsibilities of Observers shall apply to observers placed on a vessel under the Commission ROP.

1. The rights of observers shall include:

- a) Access to all areas and facilities of the vessel necessary to conduct observer duties, including the bridge, pilothouse, deck, areas used to process, weigh, and store fish, gear, equipment, fish catch, and crew, as agreed by the Commission.
- b) Access to the vessel's records including its logs and documentation for the purpose of records inspection and copying, access to navigational equipment, charts and radios, and reasonable access to other information relating to fishing.
- c) Access to and use of communications equipment and personnel, upon request, for entry, transmission, and receipt of work related data or information.
- d) Access to additional equipment, if present, to facilitate the work of the observer while on board the vessel, such as high powered binoculars, electronic means of communication, etc.
- e) Access to the working deck during net or line retrieval and to specimens (alive or dead) in order to collect samples.
- f) Notice by the vessel captain of at least fifteen (15) minutes before hauling or setting procedures, unless the observer specifically requests not to be notified.
- g) Access to food, accommodations, medical facilities, and sanitary facilities of a reasonable standard equivalent to those normally available to an officer on board the vessel.
- h) The provision of adequate space on the bridge, pilot house or other designated area for clerical work and adequate space on the deck for observer duties.
- i) Freedom to carry out their duties without interference, intimidation, or obstruction.

3. The responsibilities of observers shall include:

- a) being capable of performing the duties set out by the Commission
- b) acceptance and compliance with agreed confidentiality rules and procedures with respect to the fishing operations of the vessels and of the vessel owners
- c) Maintenance of independence and impartiality at all times while on board the fishing vessel.
- d) Compliance with the ROP protocols for observers carrying out ROP duties on board a vessel.

- e) Compliance with the laws and regulations of the CCM that exercises jurisdiction over the vessel.
- f) Respecting the hierarchy and general rules of behaviour that apply to all vessel personnel.
- g) Performance of duties in a manner that minimizes interference with fishing operations.
- h) Familiarity with the emergency procedures aboard the vessel, including the locations of life rafts, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits.
- i) Communicating regularly with the vessel captain on relevant observer issues.
- j) Observance of ethnic traditions of the crew and customs of the flag State of the vessel
- k) Adherence to the ROP Code of Conduct for observers.
- l) Explain to the vessel captain, observer duties relevant to appropriate measures adopted by the Commission.
- m) writing reports to the Commission or national programme in accordance with procedures adopted by the Commission.

Annex B

Guidelines on the Rights and Responsibilities of Vessel Operators, Captain and Crew.

In accordance with Annex 111 Article 3, and article 28 of the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. The following Guidelines on the Rights and Responsibilities of Vessel Operators, Captain and Crew shall apply when an observer is placed under the Commission ROP.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VESSEL OPERATORS AND CAPTAINS

1. The rights of vessel operators and captains shall include:

- a) Expectation that a reasonable period of prior notice of the placement of an ROP observer shall be given.
- b) Expectation that the observer will comply with the general rules of behavior, hierarchy, and laws and regulations of the member of the Commission that exercises jurisdiction over the vessel.
- c) Timely receipt from the observer provider of the relevant and current measures adopted by the Commission.
- d) Timely notification from the observer provider on completion of the observer's trip of any comments regarding the vessel operations. The captain shall have the opportunity to review and comment on the observer's report, and shall have the right to include additional information deemed relevant or a personal statement.
- e) Ability to conduct lawful fishing operations with minimum interference due to the observer's presence and performance of necessary duties.
- f) Ability to assign, at his or her discretion, a vessel crew member to accompany the observer when the observer is carrying out duties in hazardous areas.

2. The responsibilities of vessel operators and captains shall include:

- a) Accepting on board the vessel any person identified as an observer under the ROP when required by the Commission
- b) Informing the crew of the timing of the ROP observer boarding as well as their rights and responsibilities when an ROP observer boards the vessel.
- c) Assisting the ROP observer to safely embark and disembark the vessel at an agreed place and time.
- d) Giving notice to the ROP observer at least fifteen (15) minutes before the start of a set or haul on board, unless the observer specifically requests not to be notified.
- e) Assist the ROP observer in the performance of their duties in a safe manner.
- f) Allowing ROP observer access to the vessel's records including vessel logs and documentation for the purpose of records inspection and copying,
- g) Allowing access to navigational equipment, charts and radios, and reasonable access to other information relating to fishing.

- h) Permitting access to additional equipment, if present, to facilitate the work of the ROP observer while on board the vessel, such as high powered binoculars, electronic means of communication, etc.
- i) Permit the ROP observer to remove and store samples from the catch.
- j) The provision to the ROP observer, while on board the vessel, at no expense to the observer or the ROP observer's provider or government, with food, accommodation, adequate sanitary amenities, and medical facilities of a reasonable standard equivalent to those normally available to an officer on board the vessel.
- k) The provision to the ROP observer, while on board the vessel, insurance coverage for the duration of the observer's time on board the vessel.
- l) Facilitating access by the ROP observer to all areas and facilities of the vessel necessary to conduct ROP observer duties, including the bridge, communications equipment and personnel, pilothouse, deck, and areas used to process, weigh, and store fish, gear, and equipment.
- m) Ensuring the ROP observer is not obstructed, intimidated, interfered with, influenced, bribed or is attempted to be bribed in the performance of their duties.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VESSEL CREW

3. The rights of vessel crew shall include:

- a) Expectation that the ROP observer will comply with the general rules of behaviour, hierarchy, and laws and regulations of the CCM that exercises jurisdiction over the vessel.
- b) Expectation that a reasonable period of prior notice of the placement of an ROP observer shall be given by the Captain.
- c) Reasonable expectation of privacy in crew personal areas.
- d) Ability to carry out duties associated with normal fishing operations with minimal interference by the ROP observer in performance of their duties.

4. The responsibilities of the vessel crew shall include:

- a) Not obstructing, intimidating, influencing, or interfering with the ROP observer or impeding or delaying observer duties.
- b) Compliance with regulations and procedures established under the Convention and other guidelines, regulations, or conditions established by the CCM that exercises jurisdiction over the vessel.
- c) Allowing access by the observer to all areas and facilities of the vessel necessary to conduct observer duties, including the bridge, pilothouse, deck, and areas used to process, weigh, and store fish, gear, and equipment.
- d) Assisting the ROP observer to carry their duties safely
- e) Permit the ROP observer to remove and store samples from the catch.
- f) Compliance with directions given by the vessel captain with respect to the ROP observers duties