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ANNUAL REPORT ON THE EASTERN HIGH SEAS POCKET SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA (EHSP-SMA)

WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP06
20 August 2025

Submitted by the Secretariat

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 are set out in Conservation and Management Measure for the Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area (CMM 2016-02).
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 (refer to Figure 1). Information on vessels shown in the live list are sourced directly from 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 of any fishing vessels in the EHSP-SMA (whether on the RFV or not).

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 2020 to 2024. Table 3 summarises entry and exit reporting by vessel flag and type.
7. The tables indicate that the primary activity in the EHP-SMA is by longline vessels flagged to Chinese Taipei mainly occurring between February to October. 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 due to changes in operational activity arising from COVID-19. Numbers rose by around 60% in 2023 and in 2024, the numbers of vessels operating was high in the first quarter but tapered off for the rest of the year, showing a 44% decrease in the number of vessels compared to the 2019/2020 average.
8. Table 3 and Table AI - 1 summarise the numbers of entry and exit alerts generated through the Commission VMS for 2024 and 2021-2024 respectively. The reliability of entry and exit reporting generated by the Commission VMS has improved since 2020 and remains high.
9. More detail on the vessels operating in or transiting the EHSP-SMA is available in Annex 1 which lists 85 vessels reporting to the WCPFC VMS from the EHSP-SMA during 2024.

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 2017-2023³.
11. Data for the purse seine fishery shows activity by one flag CCM for the period 2012-2014, with catch volumes of less than 500 tons. There has been no other purse seine catch reports from this area since this period. Some purse seine vessels have reported VMS positions within the EHSP-SMA in recent years, but no purse seine catch has been reported suggesting these vessels are transiting and not catching fish. This is supported by observer reporting which does not indicate any fishing by purse seine vessels in the area.

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.

³The 2024 data were not available at the time of the data compilation for this report.

12. The historical flag CCM involvement in the EHSP-SMA longline fishery and their reported catches have increased consistently over time, except for a marked decrease during the COVID-19 years. Over the last seven years (2017-2024), CCM reported longline catch has increased (Figure 2⁴ and Figure 3) with longline catch reaching a high of almost 4,000 tonnes in 2023.
13. 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).
14. Over the most recent three years, the average catch in the EHSP-SMA relative to the WCPO catch represented 1% for albacore, 0.03% for bigeye, 0.05% for yellowfin and less than 0.01% for skipjack.

Transshipment

15. CMM 2016-02 prohibited all transshipment activities in the EHSP-SMA from 1 January 2019. There have been no reports of transshipments in the EHSP-SMA.
16. The Secretariat's analytical tool to assess potential transshipments by identifying vessels with VMS positions in close proximity for 4 hours or more is to be redeveloped after changes to vessels Reporting Status Tool (VRST) impacted the initial design.
17. As of 1 April 2023, observers have been required to provide reports of transshipment occurring on vessels they are deployed to in accordance with paragraph 13 of [CMM 2009-06](#). For most vessels likely to be operating in the EHSP-SMA, paragraph 13 c) would apply meaning observers must be deployed on the receiving vessel. For this reason, reviews of VMS data and observer reporting would assist to determine any potential transshipments.

Summary of Members MCS and Inspection Activities

18. 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.
19. The outcomes of four historical cases for CMM 2010-02 02 (VMS entry and exit reporting) are shown in Figure 6. No cases have been reported under the replacement CMM 2016-02.

CMS Outcomes 2013 - 2020

20. Figure 7 provides the result of the evaluation of CMM 2010-02 and CMM 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). The replacement CMM 2016-02 was evaluated in 2020 and is to be evaluated again in 2025.
21. Figure 7 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.
22. Transshipments are banned in the EHSP-SMA since and an evaluation of implementation in 2020 indicated this has been implemented by CCMs through legally binding instruments at the national level.

⁴Source : 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
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
2024												
Bunker	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Fish carrier	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Longliner	10	16	16	22	17	8	11	4	3	9	15	18
Purse seiner	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13	16	17	25	18	9	12	4	4	10	16	20

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
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
2024												
Cook Islands	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
China	0	7	10	14	9	4	5	1	0	4	7	6
Panama	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Chinese Taipei	10	9	6	8	8	4	7	3	3	6	9	12
United States of America	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13	16	17	25	18	9	12	4	4	10	16	20

Table 3: Summary of entry and exit alerts for the EHSP-SMA generated by the Commission VMS by flag in 2024 (including transit reports).

CCM	Vessel type	Number of vessels on VMS	Reported entry alerts	Reported exit alerts
Cook Islands	Bunker	1	1	1
China	Fish carrier	2	3	3
	Longliner	42	54	54
Panama	Bunker	3	5	5
	Fish carrier	1	1	1
Chinese Taipei	Longliner	33	63	63
United States of America	Purse seiner	5	6	6

Figures



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

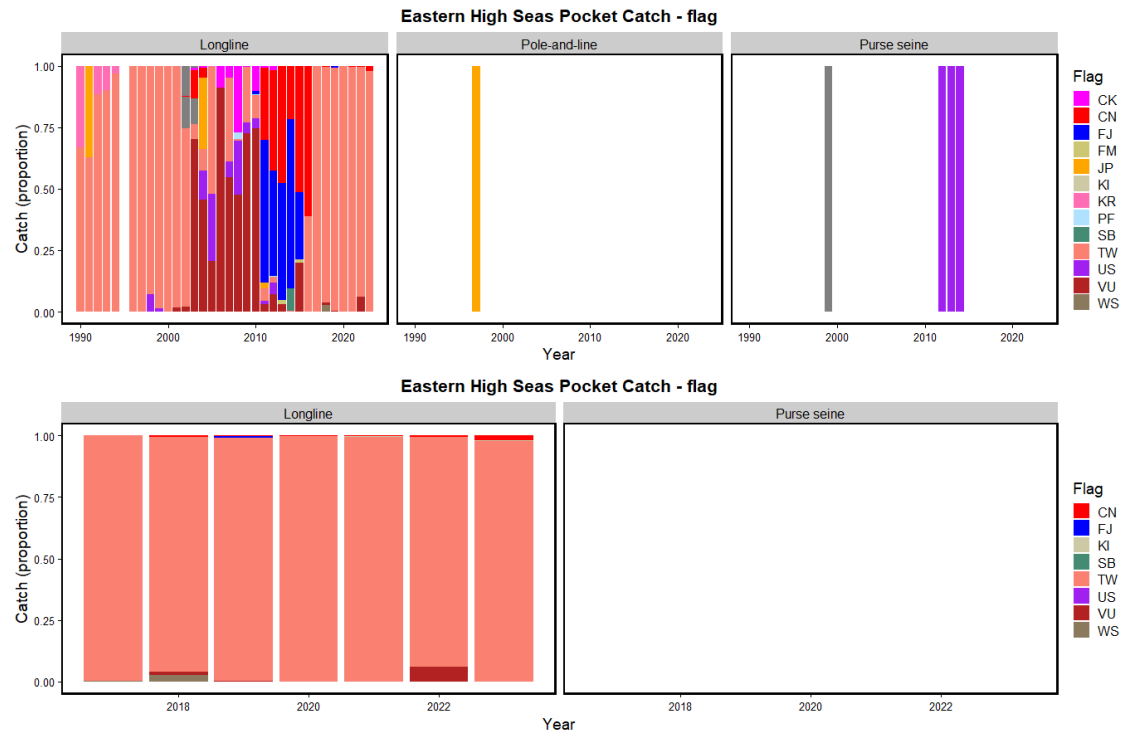


Figure 2: Proportion of catch made by flag in the EHSP-SMA LL and PS fleets by year based on data up to the end of 2024.

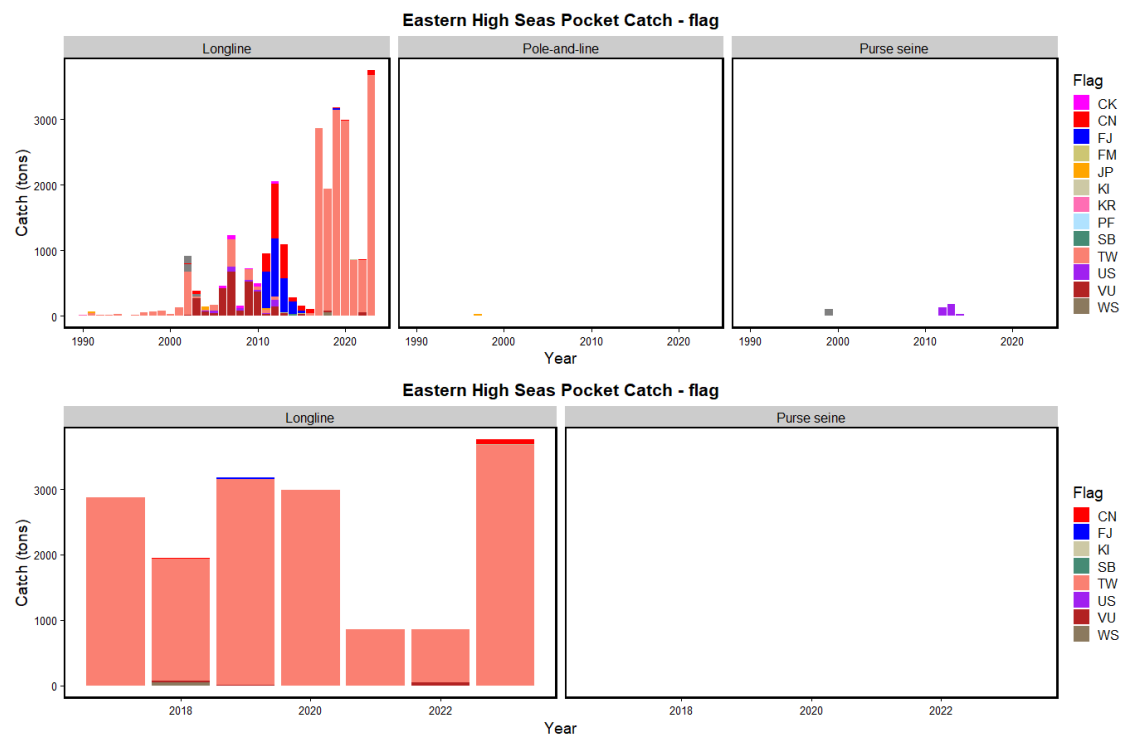


Figure 3: Catch from in the EHSP-SMA LL and PS fleets by year based on data up to the end of 2024.

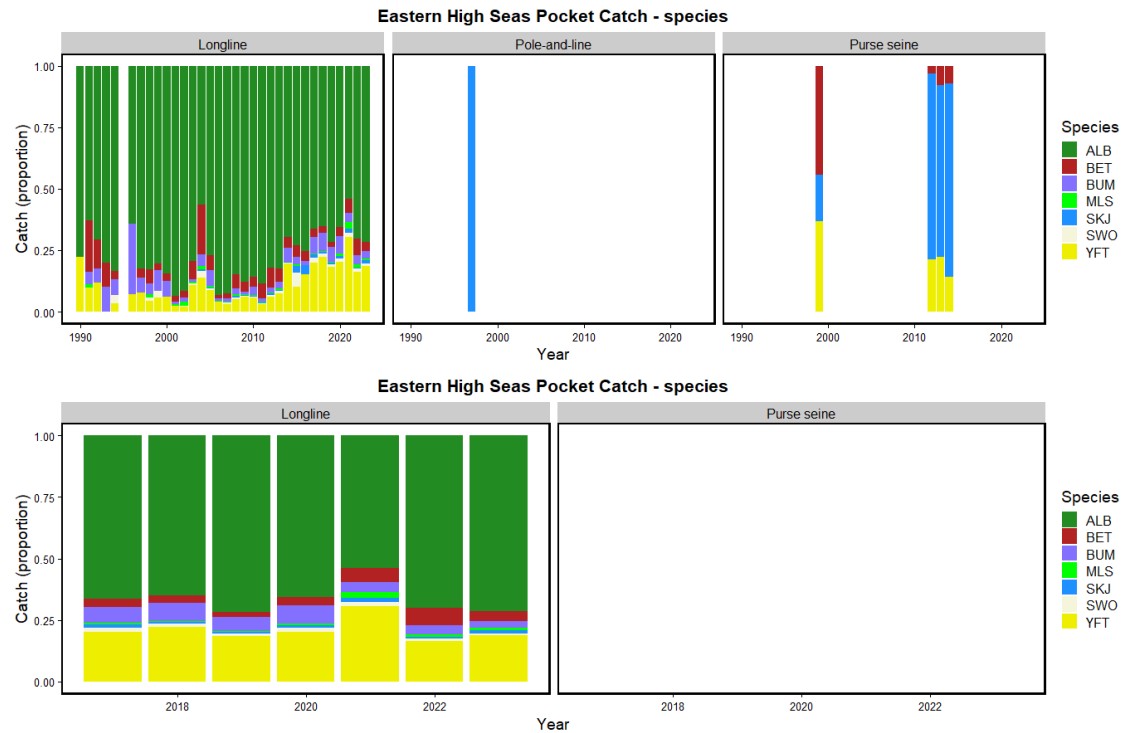


Figure 4: Proportion and catch made in EHSP-SMA by LL and PS fleets by year based on data up to the end of 2024. *Overview of tuna fisheries in the WCPO, Including Economic Conditions -2024 WCPFC-SC21-2025/GN-WP-01 rev1.*

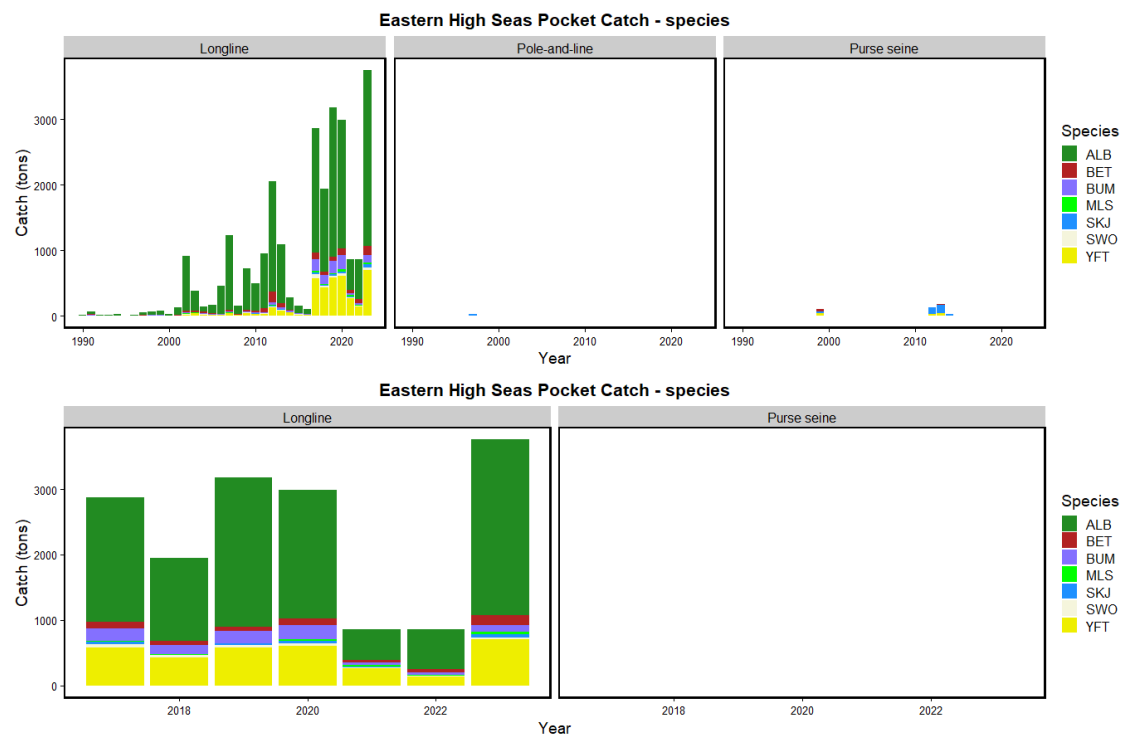


Figure 5: Catch made in EHSP-SMA by LL and PS fleets by year, based on data up to the end of 2024. *Overview of tuna fisheries in the WCPO, Including Economic Conditions -2024 WCPFC-SC21-2025/GN-WP-01 rev1.*

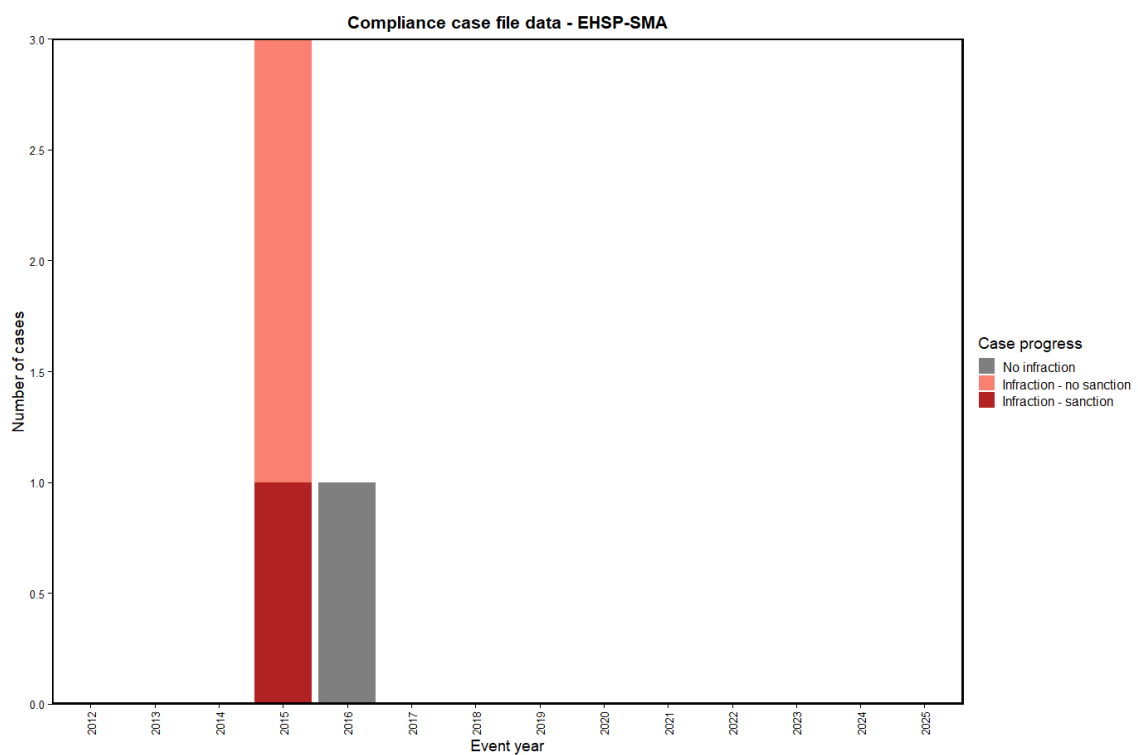


Figure 6: The outcomes of four compliance cases under CMM 2010-02 02 and from 2017 onwards, CMM 2016-02 02.

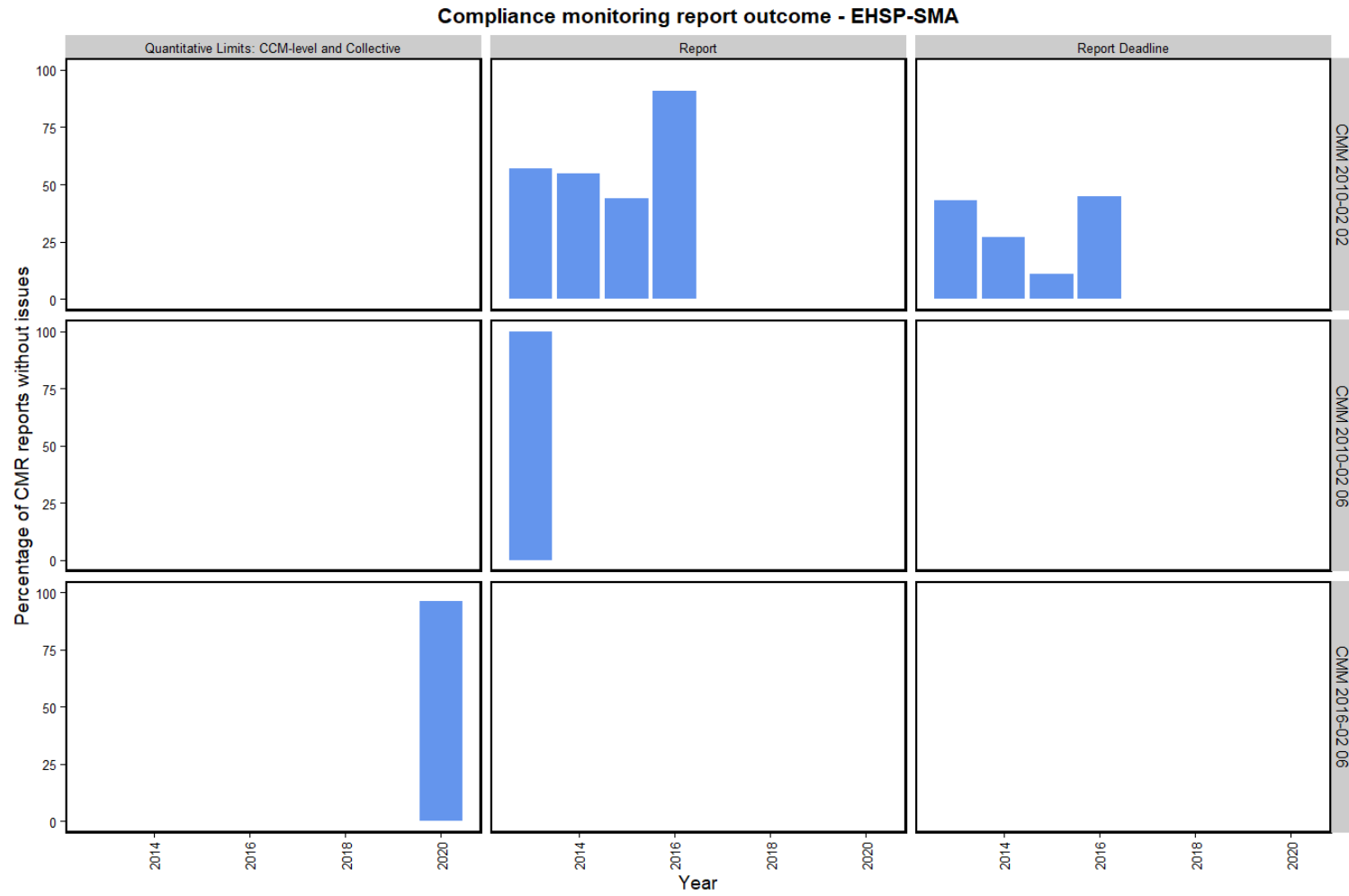


Figure 7: CMR Compliance Score relating to eastern high seas pocket related requirements over the years it was assessed.

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 2024 (includes transiting vessels).

Year	CCM	Vessel type	Number of vessels on VMS	Reported entry alerts	Reported exit alerts
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
2024	Cook Islands	Bunker	1	1	1
	China	Fish carrier	2	3	3
		Longliner	42	54	54
	Panama	Bunker	3	5	5
		Fish carrier	1	1	1
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	33	63	63
	United States of America	Purse seiner	5	6	6

Annex II

Table AII - 1: Complete list of all vessels within the EHSP-SMA reporting to WCPFC VMS in 2024 (includes transiting vessels).

Flag	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
Cook Islands	11685	CHANG SHENG 36	E5U3702	Bunker
China	11637	PINGTAIRONGLENG2	BZW9K	Fish carrier
	11612	PINGTAIRONGLENG1	BZW8K	Fish carrier
	107	JING YUAN 906	BZZT4	Longliner
	10646	HUA NAN YU 732	BZXD34	Longliner
	10705	HUA NAN YU 738	BZXD37	Longliner
	11392	ZHONGYANG23	BZW2B	Longliner
	10408	ZHONGYANG29	BZXD77	Longliner
	10703	PINGTAIRONG318	BZW9O	Longliner
	11756	PINGTAIRONG316	BZW8O	Longliner
	11776	PINGTAIRONG313	BZUU5	Longliner
	11777	PINGTAIRONG331	BZUU6	Longliner
	10696	HONG YANG 11	BZU4B	Longliner
	9924	PINGTAIRONG31	BZ7VE	Longliner
	9925	PINGTAIRONG39	BZ8VE	Longliner
	9922	PINGTAIRONG9	BZ8VD	Longliner
	9923	PINGTAIRONG13	BZ9VD	Longliner
	10474	PINGTAIRONG50	BZ4VU	Longliner
	11702	ZHOU YUAN YU 2605	BZUR3	Longliner
	11704	ZHOU YUAN YU 2607	BZUR5	Longliner
	10886	XIN SHI JI 215	BZ2VY	Longliner
	11700	ZHOU YUAN YU 2601	BZUQ9	Longliner
	11701	ZHOU YUAN YU 2602	BZUR2	Longliner
	11705	ZHOU YUAN YU 2608	BZUR6	Longliner
	10403	ZHONGYANG16	BZXD72	Longliner
	11395	ZHONGYANG22	BZW1B	Longliner
	11782	GUANG YUAN YU 336	BZXF8	Longliner
	11393	ZHONGYANG12	BZW8A	Longliner
	11226	PINGTAIRONG86	BZU1Q	Longliner
	11224	PINGTAIRONG79	BZU8P	Longliner

Table All:1 Continued:

Flag	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
China	10550	PINGTAIRONG71	BZ2VV	Longliner
	11228	PINGTAIRONG89	BZU3Q	Longliner
	11225	PINGTAIRONG82	BZU9P	Longliner
	11156	GUANG YUAN YU 339	BZWY48	Longliner
	11027	SUIYUANYU32	BZWA34	Longliner
	11997	SUIYUANYU39	BZWA25	Longliner
	11751	SUIYUANYU35	BZXE8	Longliner
	11996	SUIYUANYU40	BZWA28	Longliner
	11893	RONGHENG68	BZU7Q	Longliner
	12077	PINGTAIRONG131	BZW3P	Longliner
	12186	GUANGYUANYU331	BZXH5	Longliner
	12187	GUANGYUANYU332	BZXH6	Longliner
	11778	ZHONGYANG88	BZXE6	Longliner
	10800	HONGYANG88	BZU6C	Longliner
	10032	HAI XING 716	BZ8VG	Longliner
Panama	11925	OCEAN SPLENDID	3FAF7	Bunker
	11963	AT GLORY	H3DO	Bunker
	12302	HAI ZHI RUN 7	HOA3655	Bunker
	10953	FRIO HELLENIC	3FVQ8	Fish carrier
Chinese Taipei	3846	CHUAN HSIANG NO.368	BJ4814	Longliner
	3692	YU FENG NO.13	BG3796	Longliner
	8876	MAN FU TSAI NO.168	BG3825	Longliner
	3663	MAN FU TSAI NO.11	BG3795	Longliner
	5408	MAAN YIH FENG NO.166	BG3830	Longliner
	3849	SHIN JAAN SHIN	BG3817	Longliner
	4607	MAN YING CAI NO.6	BJ5013	Longliner
	3780	MAAN YIH FENG NO.26	BJ4719	Longliner
	8820	CHUAN HSIN NO.128	BJ4969	Longliner
	10156	CHUAN SHYANG NO.22	BG3811	Longliner
	9703	MAAN YU FENG NO.3	BJ5009	Longliner

Table All:1 Continued:

Flag	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
Chinese Taipei	3246	MAAN YU FENG NO.368	BG3805	Longliner
	5380	YU LONG FA NO.168	BG3792	Longliner
	5337	YU LONG FA NO.22	BG3850	Longliner
	11419	CHI WIN NO.1688	BH3471	Longliner
	10679	CHI HONG NO.899	BH3418	Longliner
	5417	CHI TSAI NO.988	BG3789	Longliner
	3043	MAN FU TSAI NO.9	BG3940	Longliner
	10591	CHI HSIANG NO.889	BH3417	Longliner
	3721	SHIN JYI WANG NO.6	BG3824	Longliner
	9888	YU FENG NO.513	BG3695	Longliner
	8801	SHIN JAAN SHIN NO.7	BG3848	Longliner
	8806	LIAN JI FA NO.212	BG4010	Longliner
	11775	CHI FA NO.1888	BH3495	Longliner
	11097	DE CHAN NO.26	BJ5094	Longliner
	5406	YU LONG FA NO.36	BG4016	Longliner
	3771	FU LONG SHUN	BJ4704	Longliner
	3333	MAN FU LONG	BJ3721	Longliner
	12284	TENN TSAI JI	BG3907	Longliner
	5363	CHUAN FA SHIAN NO.88	BJ4910	Longliner
	12091	CHUAN FA SHIAN NO.288	BG3794	Longliner
	4482	SHENQ BAO FA NO.168	BG3785	Longliner
	3496	TENN FA LI NO.8	BG3823	Longliner
United States of America	10087	CAPE ELIZABETH III	WDF8203	Purse seiner
	10317	CAPT VINCENT GANN	WDJ6149	Purse seiner
	8725	CAPE COD	WDD5547	Purse seiner
	4347	SEA ENCOUNTER	WTF4069	Purse seiner
	4269	PACIFIC PRINCESS	WDC3424	Purse seiner