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ANNUAL REPORT ON HIGH SEAS BOARDING AND INSPECTION (HSBI) SCHEME

WCPFC-TCC21-2025-RP04

25 August 2025

Purpose

1. This paper summarises High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) activities for 2024.

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. While HSBI has been a key MCS tool in WCPFC for many years, there has been a change in the approach to its implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of alternative existing methods for monitoring compliance such as the Automatic Identification System (AIS), VMS and aerial surveillance, and demonstrated how these tools could be applied in more effective ways. Since then, the use of these tools—along with trials of emerging technologies and more in-depth analysis of available data—has continued to evolve. This evolution is contributing to more comprehensive risk assessments and more targeted operational activities.
4. As a result, MCS tools are being applied in a more integrated way, with HSBI playing a complementary role in building stronger evidence of compliance or non-compliance. For example, an increasing number of CCMs are adopting national port State measures, expanding opportunities for information sharing in relation to risk vessels, further strengthening the effectiveness of compliance monitoring.
5. These developments have prompted increased consideration of existing and proposed CMMs to refine the application and integration of MCS tools. The sharing of outcomes from HSBI operations also contributes to this process, supporting improved integration and coordination across the compliance system.
6. [Summary information on WCPFC's HSBI](#) activities has been available on the WCPFC website since early 2019.

Members authorised for HSBI

7. As of 15 August 2025, sixteen members have notified the Commission of their intention to participate in the WCPFC HSBI scheme. In 2024, China submitted its notification of intent to participate in HSBI activities and in May 2025, Vanuatu notified of its intention to participate in HSBI activities (Table 1).
8. In 2024, Australia, France, Papua New Guinea, Chinese Taipei, and the United States made updates to their vessels on the [Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels](#). All changes were notified to CCMs in official WCPFC Circulars. Up to 30 June 2025, CCMs were notified of updates by Chinese Taipei and Tuvalu.

Table 1: Members that have notified their intent to conduct high seas boardings and inspections, and number of inspection vessels. 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 Vessels
Australia	2010	YES	54
Canada	2008	YES	5
Cook Islands	2023	YES	1
China	2024		26
Federated States of Micronesia	2008		3
Fiji	2019		4
France	2011	YES	12
Japan	2009	YES	6
Kiribati	2014		1
Korea (Republic of)	2013		2
New Zealand	2008	YES	9
Papua New Guinea	2008		1
Chinese Taipei	2008		20
Tuvalu	2010		1
United States of America	2008	YES	87
Vanuatu	2025		1

9. Collectively, as of June 2025, the HSBI participating members had 233 vessels with “Active” status on the WCPFC [Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels](#) (Figure 1).

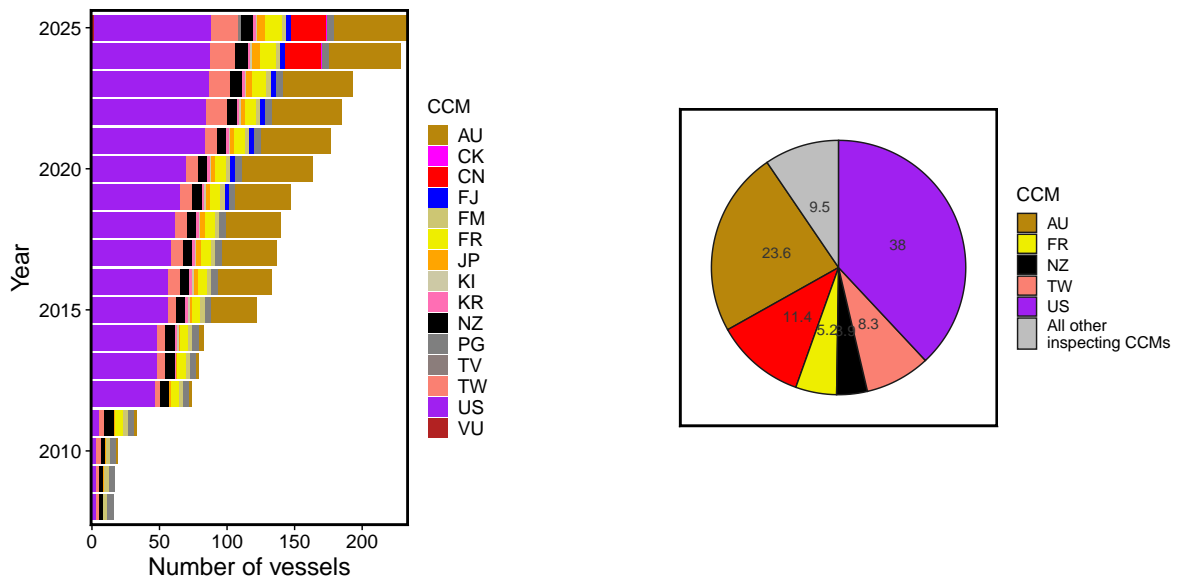


Figure 1: Number of active registered inspection vessels by year (left), and number and percentage of inspection vessels by CCM on the WCPFC Register of Authorised Inspection Vessels in 2024 (right).

New HSBI system release

10. On 26 March 2025, WCPFC [Circular 2025/16](#) announced the launch of a new system for directly notifying and uploading supporting information related to HSBI events. The system also supports the creation of Article 25(2) cases where potential infringements are identified.
11. Further details, including CCM access, were shared in June 2025 through WCPFC [Circular 2025/36](#) and [Circular 2025/39](#). Initially, the Secretariat will continue to enter HSBI reports received by e-mail, unless a CCM chooses to transition to direct entry. Supporting Helpdesk documents are available online and interested CCMs are encouraged to contact the Secretariat to discuss this option.
12. Flag CCMs can view HSBI reports for their flagged vessels in the new system. They will also be able to use a link in the relevant compliance case file to view the supporting documentation. CCM Party Administrators will need to ensure they authorize their CCM users to access the inspection system.
13. CCMs are reminded to update their contacts for Authorities of Fishing Vessels in the WCPFC CCM Accounts webpage to enable automated notifications from CCMs directly entering HSBI events. CCMs also depend on the correct contact details for the Authorities of Inspection Vessels and Authorised MCS Entities And Personnel as this information is important for dealing with email notifications for HSBI and compliance cases.
14. The Secretariat will continue to support HSBI training for CCMs to provide information on Commission processes and systems.

Review of HSBI activities

Number and locations of HSBI events in the Convention Area

15. Between 2008 and 2019, there was an overall increase in boarding and inspections with 123 HSBI conducted in 2018, and 112 in 2019, as reflected in the number of HSBI reports received (Figure 2, and see more detail in Appendix A). There was a distinct drop in activity to 35 inspections during 2020 resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, when the number of HSBI events averaged 43% of the 2018 and 2019 pre-COVID-19 levels of inspections. Since that time, there has been a consistent increase in the level of inspections with 88 HSBI conducted in 2024.
16. Inspecting CCMs provided the required notification of intent to board, completion of boarding and/or final boarding reports. Some HSBI events 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 as documented in the reports). Although there were fewer active inspecting CCMs in 2020 and 2021, inspection numbers subsequently increased again, and are currently close to pre-COVID-19 levels (see Appendix C, Figure C-1).
17. Data for vessel types showed that between 90 - 100% of the vessels inspected over the past five years were longliners (see Table 2).
18. 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 2024, the highest

proportion of vessels inspected were in 2018 (see Appendix A, Table A-1). Across all years, Chinese Taipei had high numbers of inspections and a high proportion of vessels inspected. Korea and China had the next highest number and proportion of vessels inspected. The likelihood of inspection is higher because these CCMs have the highest number of vessels on the Record of Fishing Vessels.

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

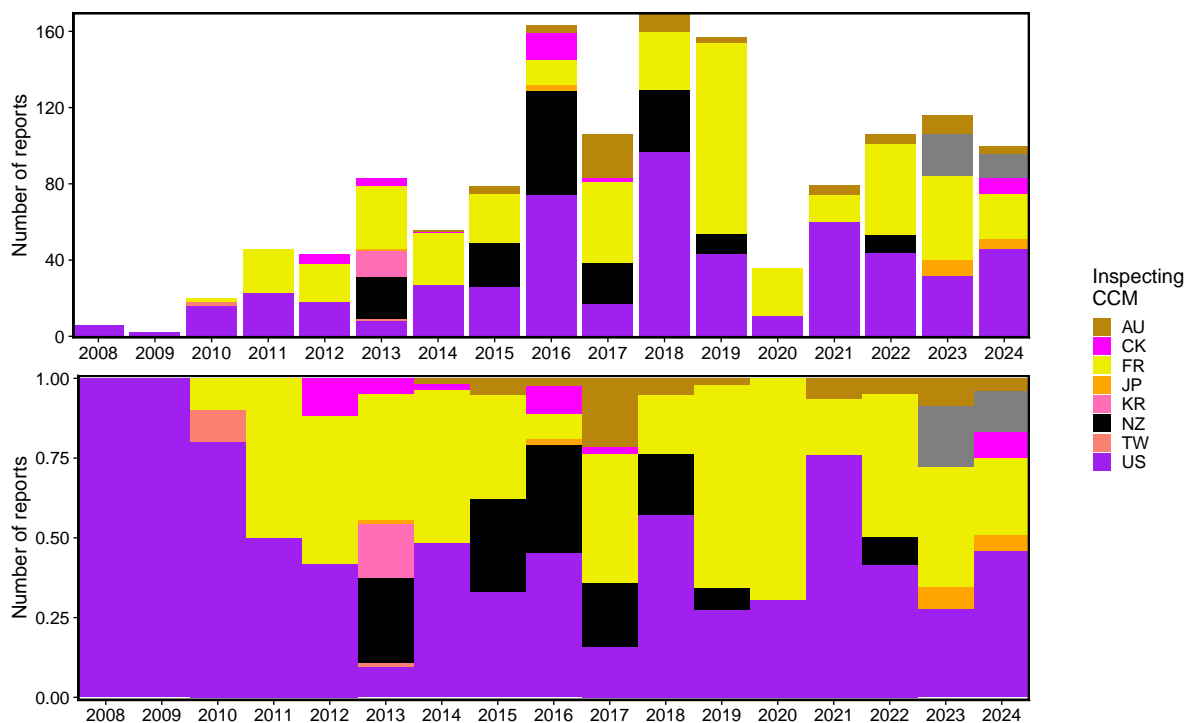


Figure 2: Number of HSBI reports (top) and proportion of reports (bottom) by Inspecting CCMs between 2008 and 2024 (numbers for 2024 are incomplete).

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	55			1	58
2022	3	86	2	3		94
2023	1	84		3	3	91
2024	4	73	1	2	2	82

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

20. HSBI activities undertaken by WCPFC CCMs 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 Appendix E, Tables E-1 to E-3).

21. 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).
22. As expected, the reduction in inspections resulted in a corresponding reduction in alleged infringements (Figure 3) . However, it is evident that inspections in 2020 and 2024 have, on average, resulted in fewer alleged infringements (see more information in Figure F-1, i.e., a summary of the number, status and, where completed, the outcome of cases by theme between 2013 and 2024; information on the specific CMMs associated with those cases is provided in Figure F-2). During the pandemic (2020–2022), inspection times were shortened to reduce health risks for both the crew and the boarding party. This may have led to lower detection rates. In more recent years, however, it is unclear whether the decline is due to changes in inspection protocols such as narrower areas of focus that limit the overall scope of an inspection, or whether it reflects improved compliance by vessels or a combination of the two.

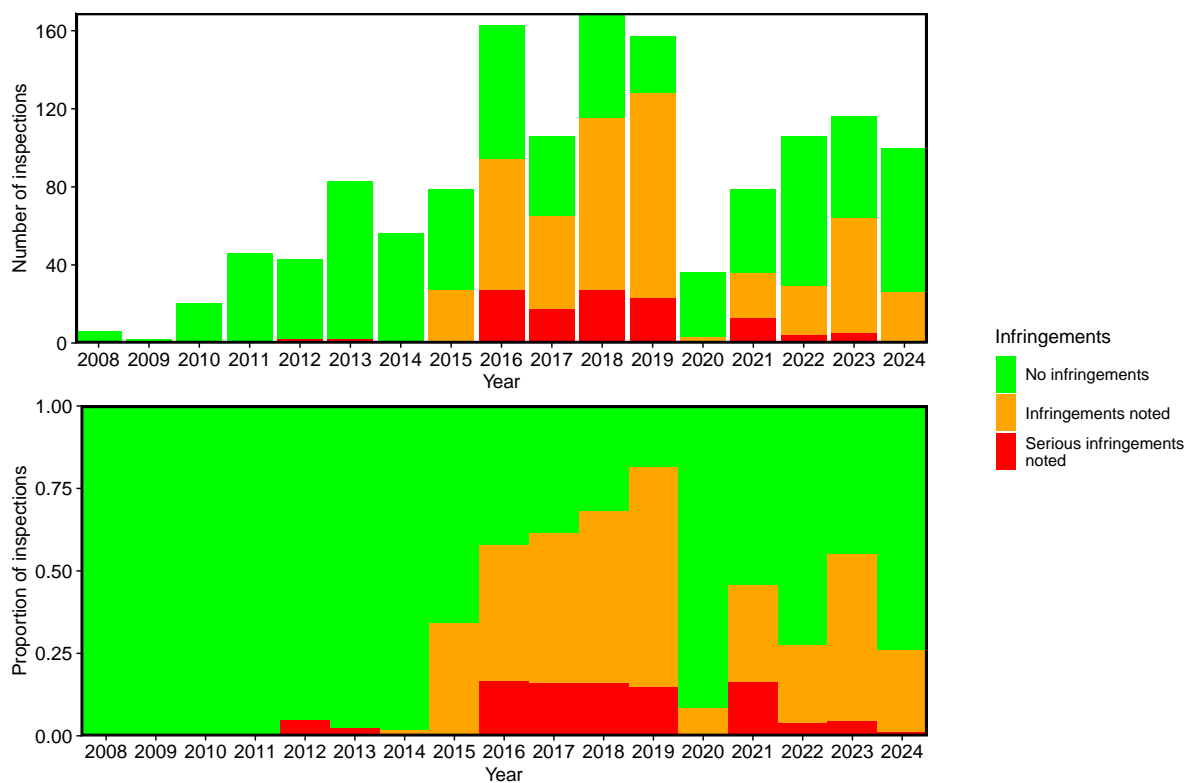


Figure 3: Number (top) and proportion (bottom) of HSBI events that resulted in reports of potential infringements.

23. 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).
24. The Compliance Case File System (CCFS) Article 25(2) list contains records of HSBI events that resulted in a request for flag CCM investigation pursuant to Article 25(2) of the Convention. Until

March 2024, one boarding and inspection event could reflect one or more alleged infringements in a single case file in CCFS.

25. Since the release of the upgraded CCFS in March 2022, the alleged infringements of each obligation in a single inspection event appear as individual cases.
26. Relevant documentation associated with each case is only accessible to those CCMs with an interest in the case such as the inspecting CCM and flag CCM and, where relevant, by the coastal State and Regional Observer Programme.
27. The number of cases of alleged infringements arising from HSBI between 2008 and 2024 is shown in Table E-2 and Table E-3. The tables also show 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 identified in HSBI reports pursuant to Article 25(2) between 2013 and 2024 and between 2016 and 2024, respectively.
28. Several alleged infringements in 2021 and 2024 are still under investigation. These cases are awaiting updates from flag CCMs on the progress of their investigations, including any outcomes or judgements reached.

CCM feedback on HSBI operational outcomes

29. 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 2024 and 2025 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 RFV;
 - g) no incinerators present but little garbage on board; and
 - h) poor crew/labour conditions.
30. 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 operator's awareness of their obligations.

Intersessional process to develop HSBI guidelines

31. In December 2024, WCPFC21 agreed to begin an [intersessional process](#) to develop voluntary regional guidelines for the use of tools that support HSBI activities. These guidelines, which have been under development this year, will complement the existing CMM 2008-06 and other related CMMs that address HSBI obligations (e.g., bycatch mitigation).
32. Initial topics under discussion in the intersessional HSBI work include data collection and sampling protocols, with online meetings progressing developments on the following draft guides:
 - DNA testing guide.
 - Weight estimation guide.
 - Measuring tool calibration guide.
 - Bycatch mitigation measuring guide.
 - Photograph and video evidence guide.
33. The development of these guidelines is based on existing HSBI protocols used by CCMs in the WCPFC area. The goal is to establish core principles and minimum voluntary standards for each tool, promoting consistency across inspections. These standards are intended to support, not replace, any more detailed national inspection requirements of individual CCMs. Participants in the intersessional process are also considering updates to the 2019 version of the Standardised multi-language questionnaire. More information is available for CCMs [here](#).

CCMs reporting on implementation of CMM 2006-08

Reporting through Annual Report Part 2

34. The most recent reporting by CCMs on HSBI was through Annual Report Part 2 covering 2024 activities, which supports a review of the completeness of their required reporting of HSBI activities.¹ (see Appendix H, Figure H-1).

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

35. 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 reflects improved implementation of the required reporting by applicable CCMs, with most obligations fully implemented by RY2015.
36. No reviews of obligations under the CMS have occurred since RY2015; however, one implementation obligation (CMM 2006-08 07) is to be reviewed for RY2024.

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

Appendix A: Number of Vessels Inspected

Table A-1: Number of vessels that "fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2019 to 2024.

Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
Australia	2019	3		
	2020	4		
	2021	7		
	2022	9		
	2023	15		
	2024	8		
Canada	2021	1		
China	2019	386		
	2020	375	12	3.20
	2021	365	5	1.37
	2022	367	38	10.35
	2023	355	25	7.04
	2024	358	33	9.22
Cook Islands	2019	19		
	2020	19		
	2021	18		
	2022	14	1	7.14
	2023	8		
	2024	5		
Curacao	2020	1		
	2021	1		
	2024	1		
EU-Spain	2019	5		
	2020	5		
	2021	10		
	2022	10		
	2023	12		
	2024	12	3	25.00
Ecuador	2019	5		
	2020	5		
	2021	5		
	2022	5	1	20.00
	2023	5		
	2024	5		

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Table A-1: Number of vessels that "fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2019 to 2024 (Continued).

Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
El Salvador	2019	2		
	2020	2		
	2021	2		
	2022	2	1	50.00
	2023	2		
	2024	2		
Federated States of Micronesia	2019	40		
	2020	42		
	2021	45		
	2022	41	1	2.44
	2023	41		
	2024	38		
Fiji	2019	36		
	2020	34		
	2021	23		
	2022	15		
	2023	26	6	23.08
	2024	20		
Japan	2019	548		
	2020	440		
	2021	499	9	1.80
	2022	391	4	1.02
	2023	385	1	0.26
	2024	381	1	0.26
Kiribati	2019	14		
	2020	12		
	2021	13		
	2022	17		
	2023	14		
	2024	15		
Korea (Republic of)	2019	158		
	2020	159	4	2.52
	2021	149	4	2.68
	2022	144	5	3.47
	2023	150	4	2.67
	2024	145	2	1.38

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Table A-1: Number of vessels that "fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2019 to 2024 (Continued).

Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
Liberia	2019	3		
	2020	2		
Marshall Islands	2019	16		
	2020	15		
	2021	16		
	2022	13		
	2023	13		
	2024	12		
Nauru	2019	11		
	2020	16		
	2021	15		
	2022	20		
	2023	24		
	2024	22		
New Zealand	2019	4		
	2020	2		
	2021	3		
	2022	1		
	2023	3		
	2024	2		
Panama	2019	87		
	2020	84		
	2021	95		
	2022	89	2	2.25
	2023	83		
	2024	79		
Papua New Guinea	2019	24		
	2020	17		
	2021	13		
	2022	4		
	2023	3		
	2024	12		

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Table A-1: Number of vessels that "fished" and that were inspected by CCM for each year from 2019 to 2024 (Continued).

Flag CCM	Year	Vessels that fished	Vessels inspected	Proportion inspected (%)
Philippines	2019	306		
	2020	262		
	2021	286	2	0.70
	2022	164		
	2023	244	7	2.87
	2024	255	6	2.35
Solomon Islands	2019	5		
	2020	3		
	2021	3		
	2022	3		
	2023	9		
	2024	4		
Chinese Taipei	2019	646		
	2020	607	17	2.80
	2021	497	35	7.04
	2022	505	36	7.13
	2023	504	46	9.13
	2024	498	33	6.63
Tuvalu	2019	2		
	2020	4		
	2021	7		
	2022	7		
	2023	7		
	2024	6		
United States of America	2019	183		
	2020	183		
	2021	182		
	2022	173		
	2023	168		
	2024	159		
Vanuatu	2019	73		
	2020	71	1	1.41
	2021	66	3	4.55
	2022	62	5	8.06
	2023	64	2	3.12
	2024	56	4	7.14

Appendix B: Inspection reports

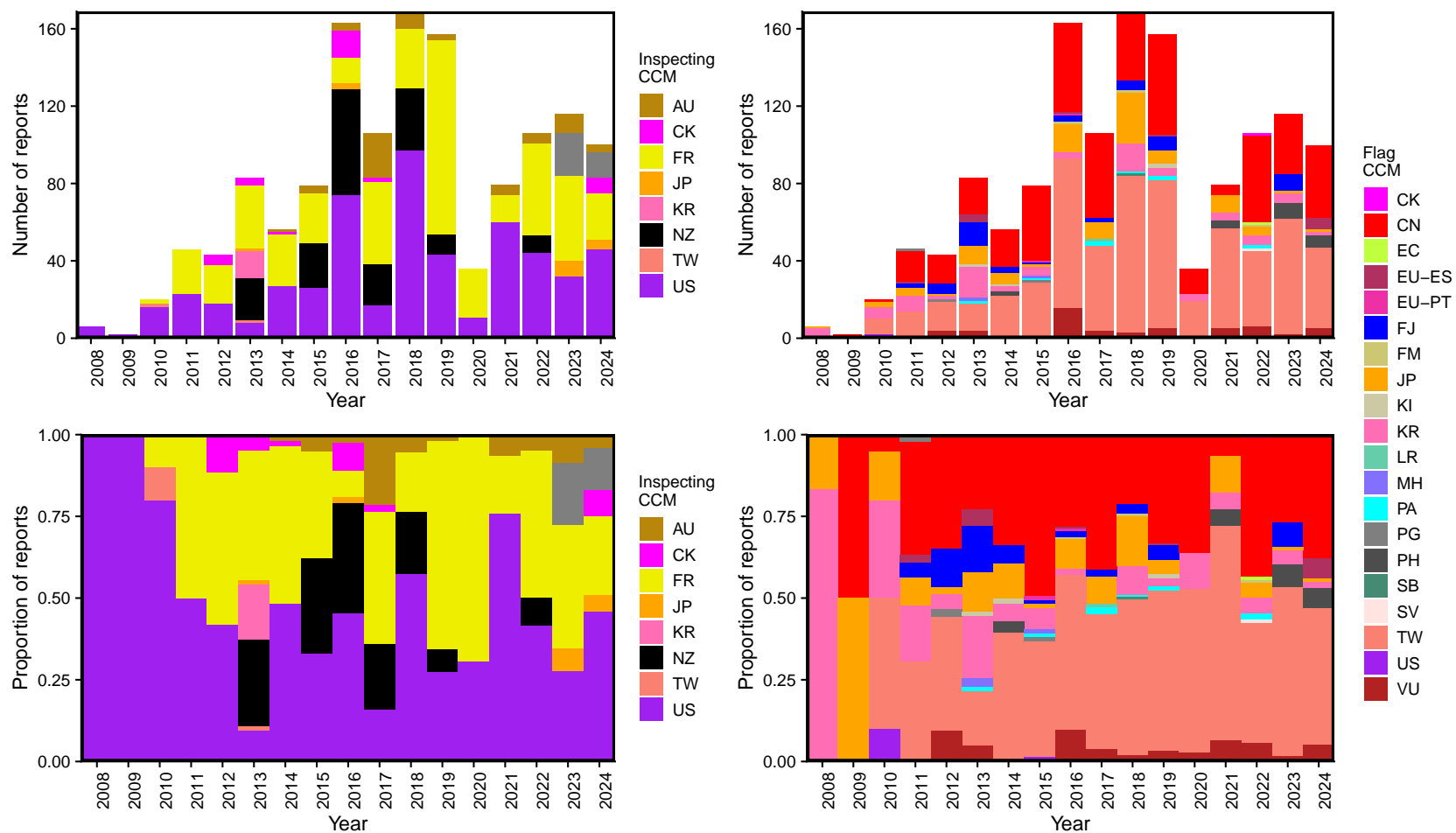


Figure B-1: The number of inspection reports received (top) and the proportion of boarding reports (bottom) by inspecting CCM (left) and by the flag of the inspected vessel (right).

Appendix C: Inspection report number summary

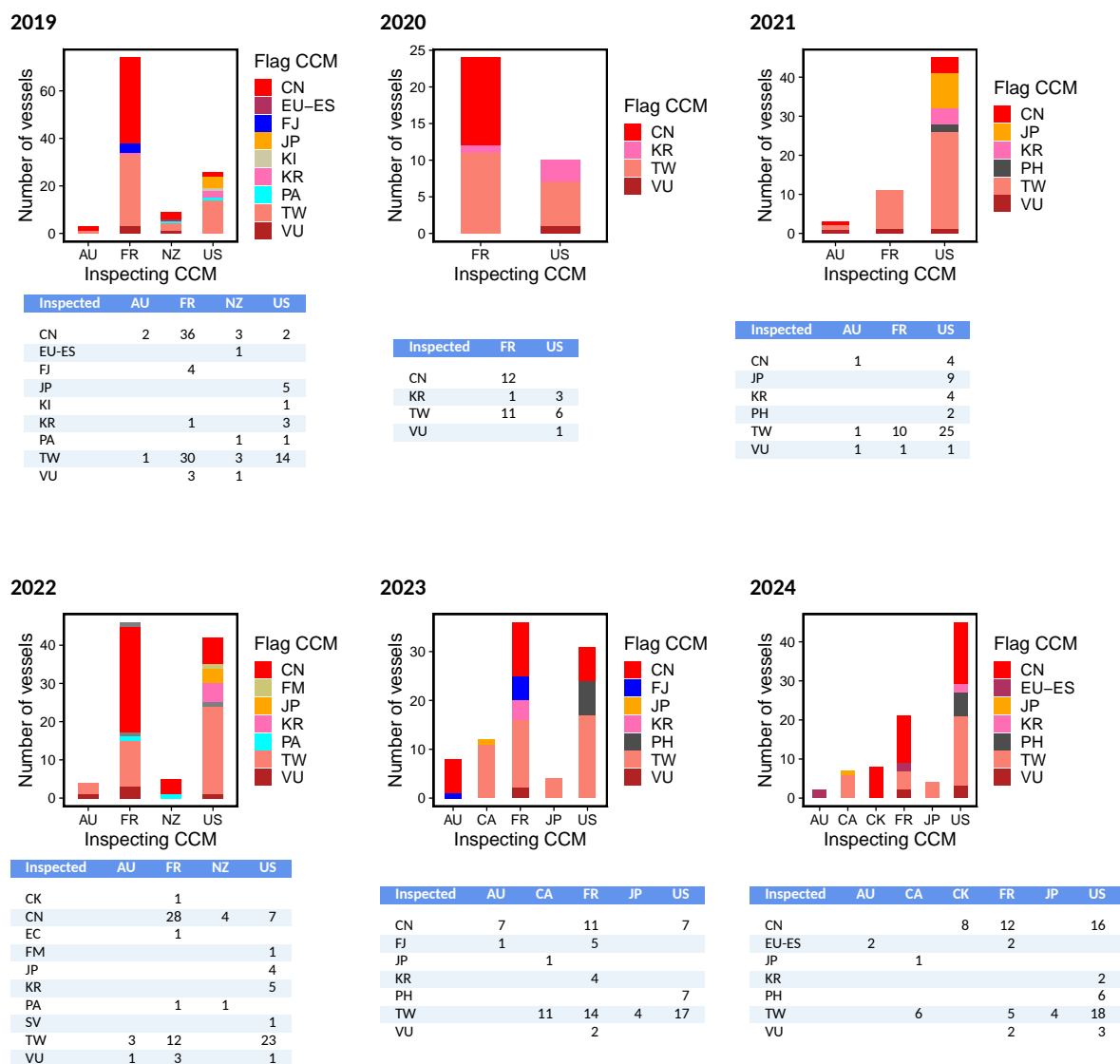


Figure C-1: Summary of the number of inspection reports received from each inspecting CCM and the flag CCM of the vessel inspected for each year in 2019 and 2024

Appendix D: Location and distribution of all vessel inspections

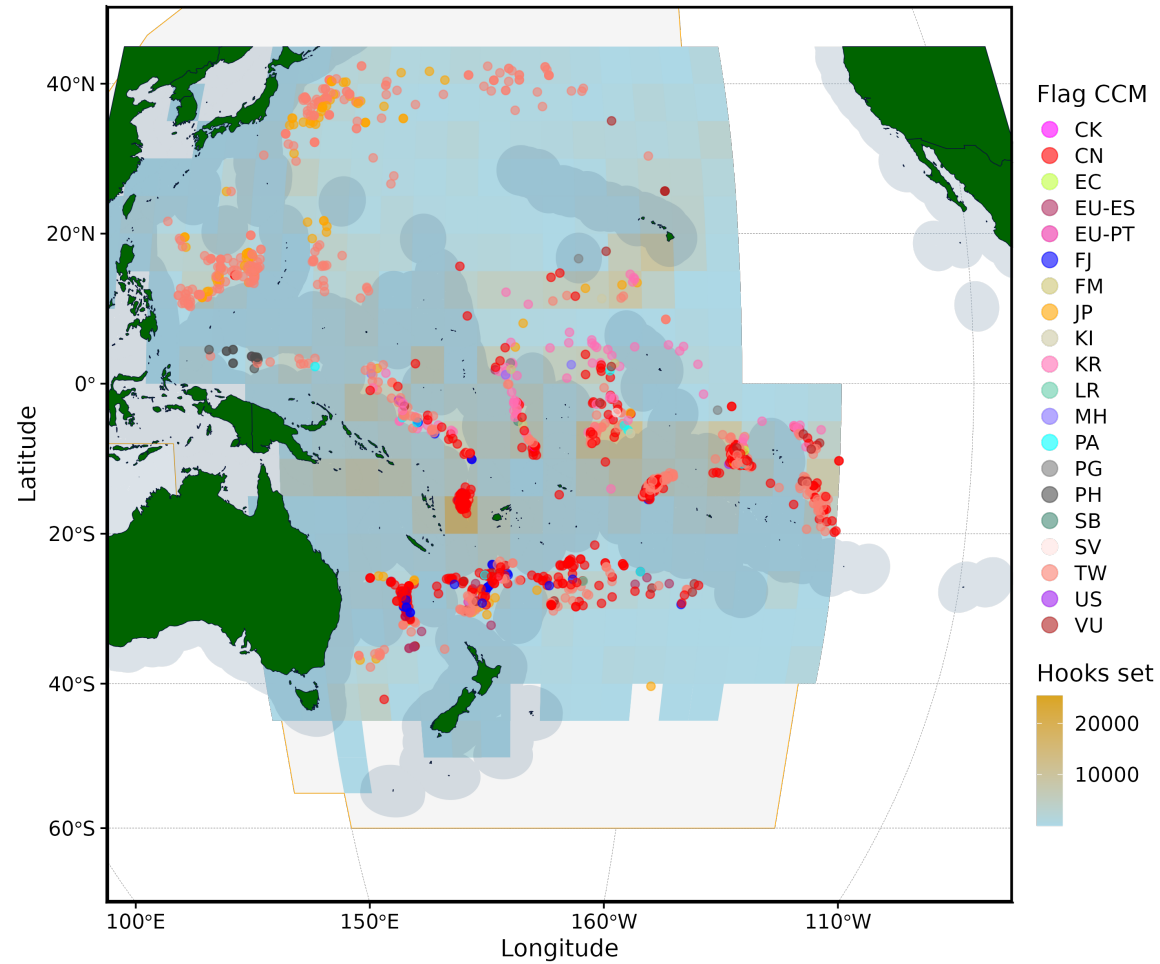


Figure D-1: Location of all High Seas Boarding and Inspections conducted in the Convention Area since 2008. Shading represents the averaged surface-longline fishing effort in hooks (1000s) from 2016 to 2024.

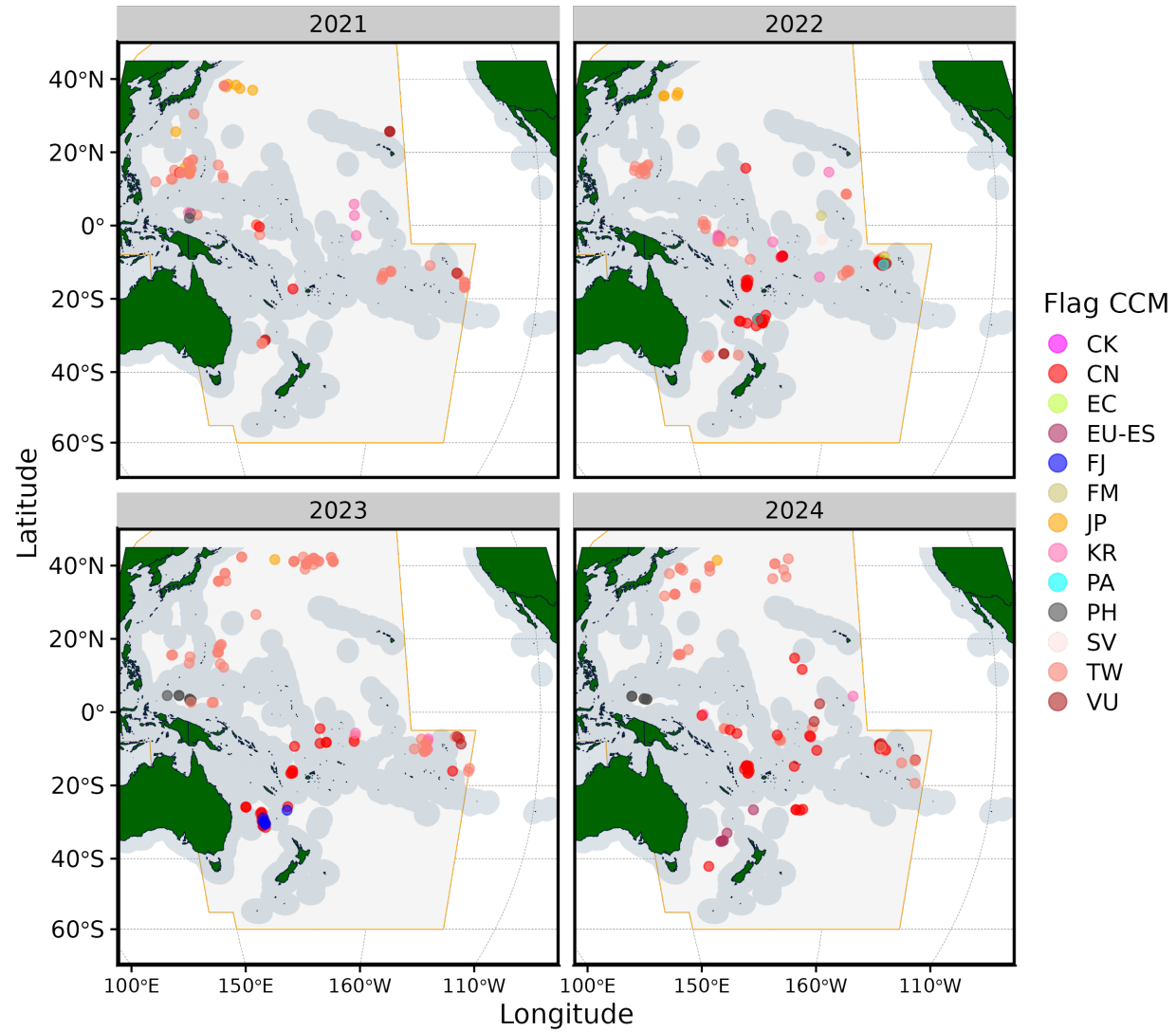


Figure D-2: Distribution of all High Seas Boarding and Inspections in the Convention Area from 2021 to 2024. Shading represents the averaged surface-longline fishing effort in hooks (1000s) for this time period.

Appendix E: Information on infringement types

Table E-1: Information on number of infringements noted by vessel type from inspections between 2008 and 2024 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	16	5	2	69.57	30.43	23
Longliner	747	459	120	56.33	43.67	1326
Pole and line	16	5	0	76.19	23.81	21
Purse seiner	23	8	0	74.19	25.81	31
Support vessel	3	2	5	30.00	70.00	10

Table E-2: Information on number of infringements noted by boarding CCMs from inspections between 2008 and 2024 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	18	39	11	26.47	73.53	68
Canada	16	32	9	28.07	71.93	57
Cook Islands	23	11	0	67.65	32.35	34
France	276	196	9	57.38	42.62	481
Japan	7	11	0	38.89	61.11	18
Korea (Republic of)	14	0	0	100.00	0.00	14
New Zealand	69	97	7	39.88	60.12	173
Chinese Taipei	3	0	0	100.00	0.00	3
United States of America	380	94	91	67.26	32.74	565

Table E-3: Information on number of infringements noted by Boarded Vessel CCM from inspections between 2008 and 2024 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	258	156	19	59.58	40.42	433
Cook Islands	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
EU-Portugal	2	0	0	100.00	0.00	2
EU-Spain	9	5	0	64.29	35.71	14
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	29	13	7	59.18	40.82	49
Japan	71	19	15	67.62	32.38	105
Kiribati	2	2	0	50.00	50.00	4
Korea (Republic of)	81	8	0	91.01	8.99	89
Liberia	0	1	0	0.00	100.00	1
Marshall Islands	3	0	0	100.00	0.00	3
Panama	8	1	0	88.89	11.11	9
Papua New Guinea	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
Philippines	7	7	6	35.00	65.00	20
Singapore	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
Solomon Islands	1	0	0	100.00	0.00	1
Chinese Taipei	301	235	80	48.86	51.14	616
United States of America	2	1	0	66.67	33.33	3
Vanuatu	24	31	0	43.64	56.36	55

Appendix F: Compliance Case File System (CCFS) data

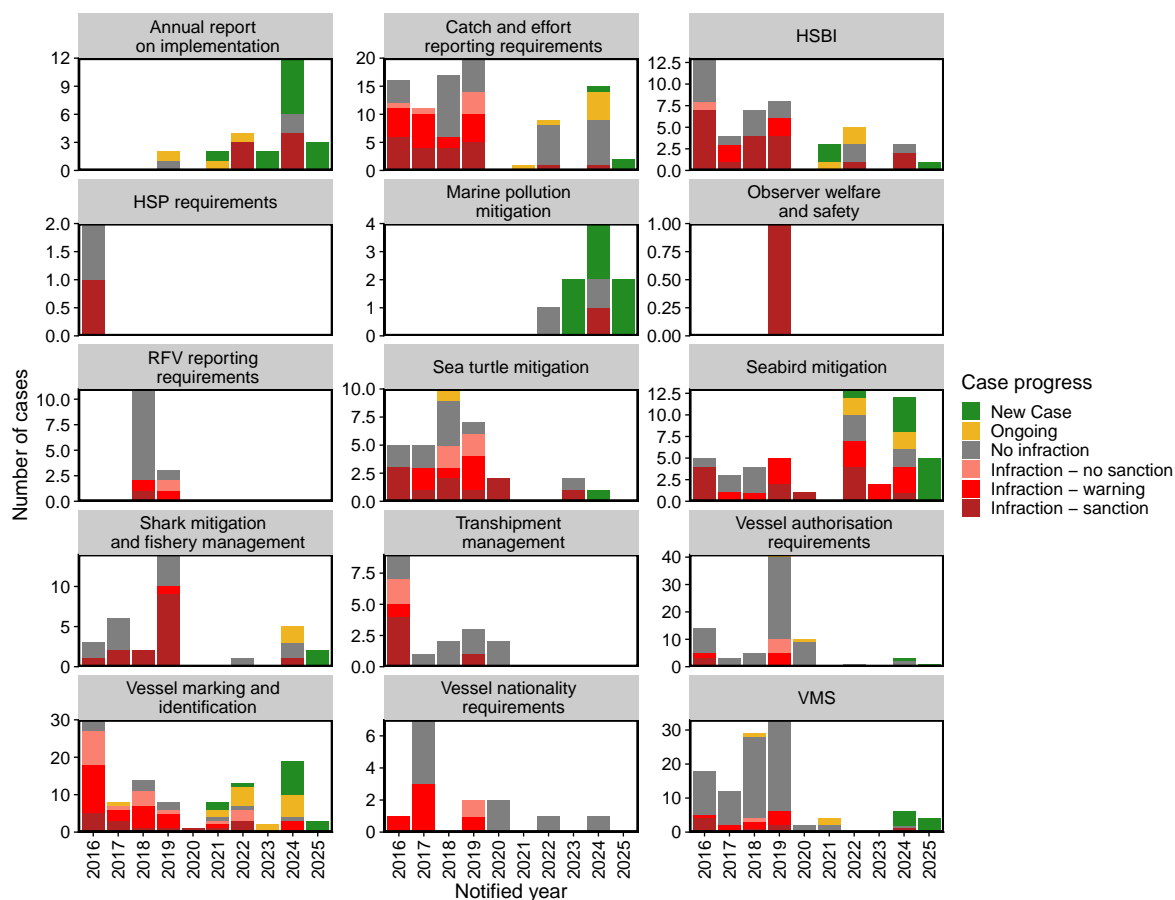


Figure F-1: Summary of the themes and number of cases relating to alleged infringements from High Seas Boarding and Inspection between 2016 and 2024, and whether cases are still under investigation and, if completed, the outcome of the investigation.

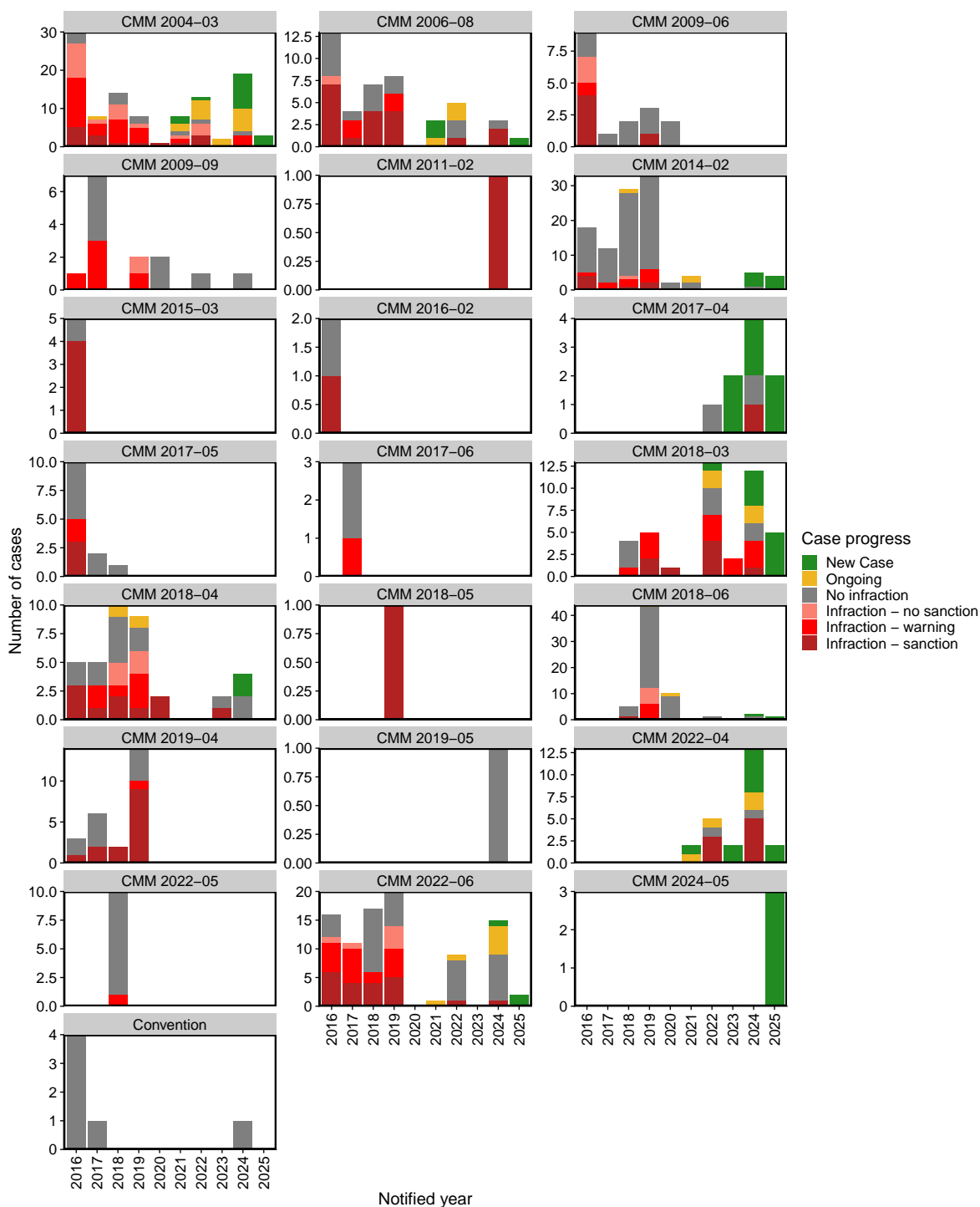


Figure F-2: Summary of the outcomes of investigations of specific obligations where there have been alleged infringements identified in High Seas Boarding and Inspection reports that have resulted in a request for flag State investigation pursuant to Article 25(2) between 2016 and 2024.

Appendix G: Alleged infringements

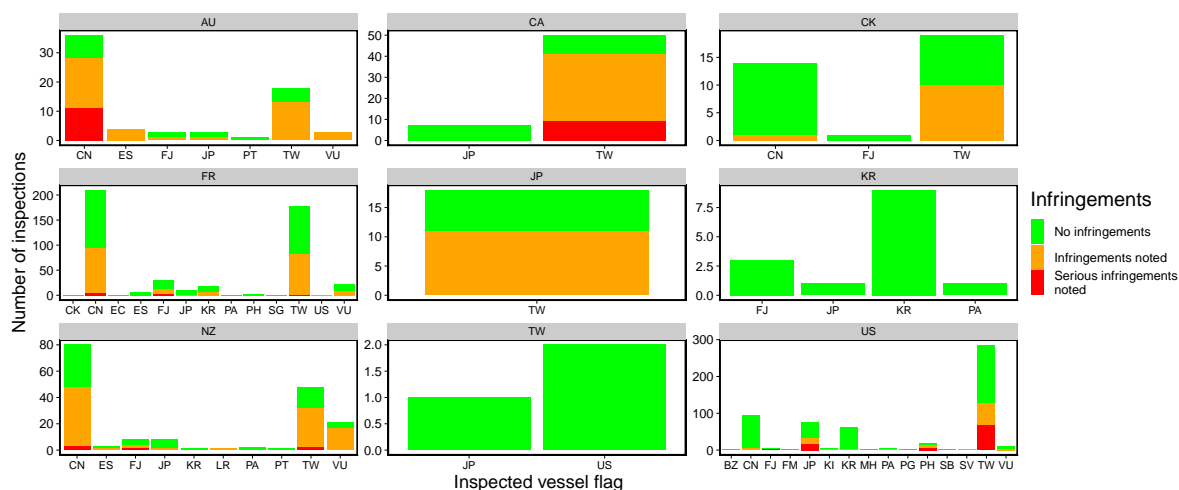


Figure G-1: High Seas Boarding and Inspection information from 2008 to 2024, showing the number of alleged infringements detected by inspecting CCM on the flag CCM. (Note, these numbers do not reflect the number of vessels but the number of alleged infringements noted during an inspection.)

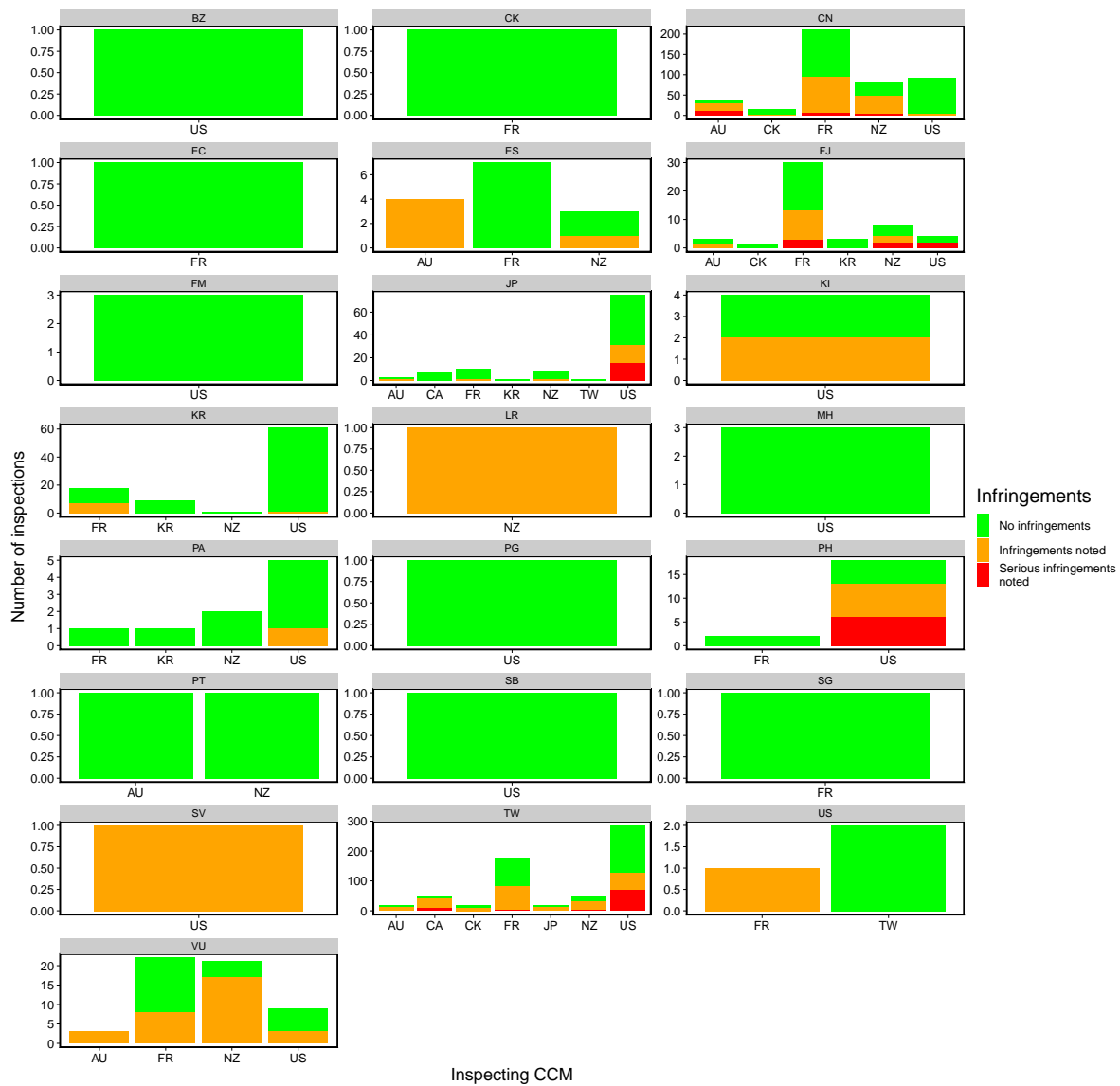


Figure G-2: High Seas Boarding and Inspection information from 2008 to 2024, showing the number of alleged infringements detected on flag CCMs by inspecting CCM. (Note, these numbers do not reflect the number of vessels but the number of alleged infringements noted during an inspection.)

Appendix H: Compliance Monitoring Report Outcomes

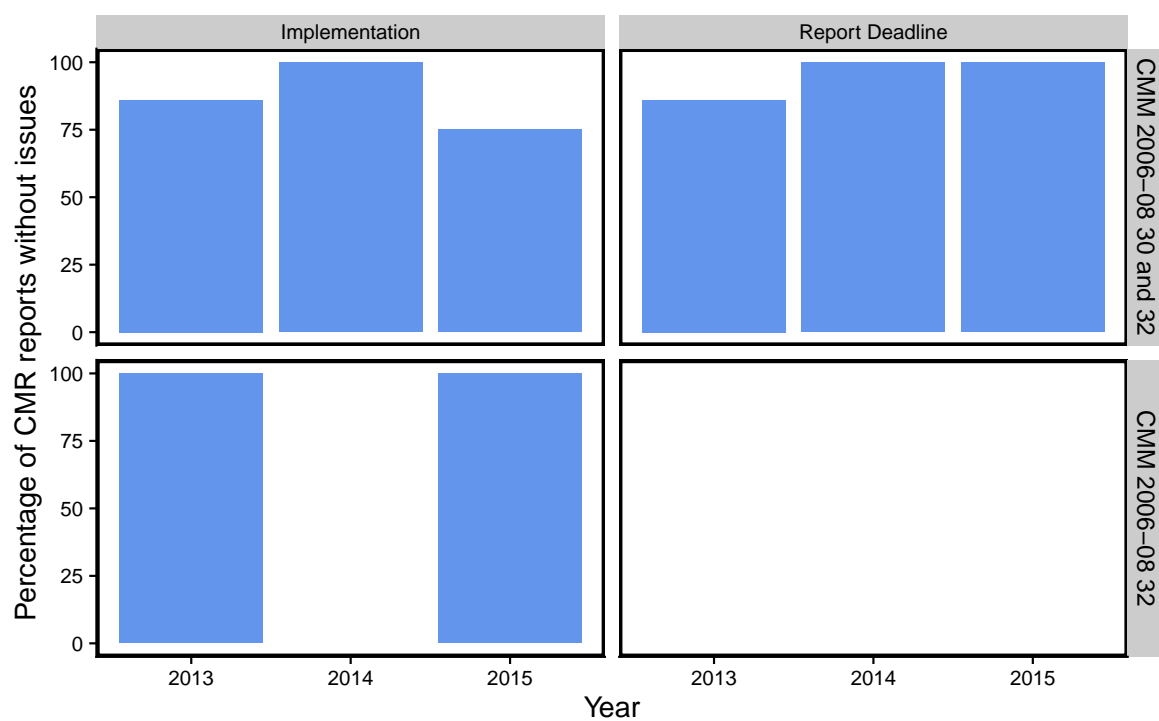


Figure H-1: CMR compliance score for High Seas Boarding and Inspection related obligations for each year assessed.