



**NORTHERN COMMITTEE
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STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ROP IN THE NORTHERN AREA

**WCPFC-NC5-2009/WP-01
5 September 2009**

CMM 2007-01(Annex C, Paragraph 9) requires that the Northern Committee at its 2010 annual session shall make recommendations to the Commission on the implementation of the Regional Observer Program (ROP) for fishing vessels fishing for fresh fish in the area north of 20 degrees north, along with a date for implementation no later than December 31, 2014. Japan would like to present some idea for the implementation of ROP for the Northern Area for consideration at the NC5 meeting.

1. Facts to be taken into consideration

(a) In Japan, smaller longline fishing vessels with legally-designated maximum crew capacity of six (6) account for nearly 30% of the total Japanese offshore longline vessels fishing for fresh tuna. Six (6) crew members are the minimum for the navigation and for the operation outside of the EEZ. This is because at least one (1) personnel is required to watch-keep each for the bridge section and for the engine section respectively. In the 8-hour watch-keeping shift, six (6) crew members are required. It is therefore impracticable for such small longline fishing vessels to accept an extra person for observer boarding. However, these small longline fishing vessels are generally aged and will be replaced with new vessels with more crew capacity gradually.

(b) The sea condition in the Northern area is generally much rougher than in the tropical region. Especially, the sea condition frequently gets furry during the winter season when the low pressure systems are formed in the area one after another. Observers to be deployed to fishing vessels in this particular area need to be dedicated and well accustomed with such harsh circumstances. From the same reason, older vessels should be avoided for observer placement to prevent possible accidents.

(c) Japanese offshore group purse-seiners mainly fish for fresh fish within the EEZ. However, these vessels once in a while operate outside of the EEZ when fish schools are formed in these distant areas. For these fishing vessels, it is difficult to predict when such high-seas fishing operations, which is subject to the WCPFC ROP requirement, occur.

(d) In addition to the factors above, most of those vessels are run by house hold scale with

marginal profit, and they cannot bear all the expense of observers from outside Japan, including air-flight fare, cost for getting visa.

(e) Vessels fishing for fresh tuna in the Northern Area depart from a domestic port and return to a domestic port to unload the catch for each trip. Certain scientific data can be collected at these landing sites. Indeed, the Statistics Specialist Working Group (ST-SWG9 of the SC3 meeting noted that obtaining such data from this source can be even more effective than observer program, mentioning “ Unloading data represent the actual measured weights of fish unloaded, and therefore a better source of the trip catch than weights recorded on the log sheet”.

2. Proposed strategy

Despite the difficulties described as (a), (b), (c), and (d) above, the Northern Committee shall make recommendations on the implementation of ROP in the Northern area in conformity with CMM 2007-01. To achieve this, Japan would like to lead the discussion through the email corresponding group with the below Skeleton of Measures as a basis, and report back with a draft recommendation to the 6th Northern Committee meeting in 2010 for adoption.

[Skeleton of Measures]

(a) No later than December 31, 2014, CCMs shall implement observer program for fishing vessels used exclusively to fish for fresh fish in the area north of 20 degrees north. CCMs shall make their best effort to achieve 5% observer coverage of the effort of these fishing vessels. Observers shall be sourced from the WCPFC Regional Observer Program including authorized national programs of flag states.

(b) In case a CMM fails to achieve 5% observer coverage onboard, the CCM shall collect scientific information through monitoring and sampling at landing sites or other monitoring programs to supplement the shortfalls.