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5th ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME

WCPFC9-2013-IP01
Oct 31st 2013

1. Introduction

- a) Paragraph of Article 28 of the WCPFC Convention states: “The observer programme shall be coordinated by the Secretariat of the Commission, and shall be organized in a flexible manner which takes into account the nature of the fishery and other relevant factors.”
- b) Paragraph 3 of CMM 2007-01 states: “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.”
- c) Paragraph 12 of CMM 2007-01 “Role of the Secretariat” lists a number of ROP activities that the Secretariat is required to carry out.
- d) This paper reports on the different aspects of the ROP as required by the Convention, CMM 2007-01 and the outcomes of WCPFC9

2. General

- 2.1 The ROP section of the Secretariat in 2012/13 has assisted in observer and debriefer training sessions at the WCPFC training centre in FSM, as well as conducting cross endorsement courses held in Kiribati and RMI. Assistance was also given on request to the Philippines to help with observer and debriefing training. The WCPFC Secretariat continues to assist national and sub regional observer programmes on matters regarding observer roles in relation to WCPFC CMMs, observer transshipment, and other aspects of observer roles and duties.

3. Continuation of ROP Audits.

- 3.1 The initial audits of national and subregional observer programmes for the implementation of the Regional Observer Programme (ROP) were completed by the June 2012. The reviews found that observer programmes were complying with almost all of the “Minimum Standards” required by the Commission. Understandably, because of the rapid introduction of 100% observer coverage on Purse-seine vessels fishing 20N-20S, a number of programmes could not fully meet the required standards for debriefing in the time given. Therefore programmes were fully authorised with a proviso that they be checked in a couple of years time to ensure they had met the required standard for debriefing. The training of debriefers requires direction by experts and observer programmes also requires experienced observers to be trained as debriefers.
- 3.2 Para 88 (vii) of the IWGROP2 report indicates there should be continuous reviews of the ROP programmes by the Secretariat to ensure standards are maintained, this is also reflected, in

(CMM 2007-01 Para 12 the role of the Secretariat will be to: coordinate ROP activities, including, inter alia: (ii) so that existing national programmes and sub-regional programmes participating in the ROP maintain standards as adopted by the Commission; to ensure WCPFC standards are in place and being maintained.

- 3.3 ROP authorised observer programme should be reviewed by the Secretariat to ensure established standards and standards approved since the last audits have been implemented and are being maintained. To ensure WCPFC standards are being maintained by ROP authorised programmes a proposed schedule “Table 1” for the review of these programmes over a period of the next 5 years was presented for support. (Refer to recommendation on this issue in Para 19.1)
- 3.4 Programmes that are new to the ROP will be added to the list. A small budget each year to accommodate these reviews would be required however, the current budget granted by the Commission for ROP audits would be sufficient if granted on a yearly basis.
- 3.5 TCC9 Recommended that the review of ROP authorised programmes continues and that the order in Table 1 was accepted, and would be rotated in the same order after the first 5 year review period.

Table 1 Suggested order for Observer Programme reviews

Observer Programme	Authorization Dates	Suggested Review Year
USA	Nov 2010	2014
Philippines	May 2010	2014
Korea	March 2011	2014
Multilateral Treaties on Fisheries (FFA)	June 2011	2014
Solomon Islands	June 2011	2014
Vanuatu	April 2011	2014
Fiji	March 2011	2015
Kiribati	May 2011	2015
Tuvalu	May 2012	2015
Tonga	March 2011	2015
Nauru	June 2011	2015
Federated States of Micronesia	July 2011	2016
Palau	Nov 2011	2016
Marshall Islands	March 2011	2016
Papua New Guinea	June 2011	2016
Australia	Jan 2012	2017
New Zealand	May 2012	2017
Cook Islands	Sept 2011	2017
Chinese Taipei	Oct 2011	2017
China	Oct 2011	2017
FSM Arrangement (PNA)	Sept 2013	2017
New Caledonia	May 2012	2018
Tokelau	Interim Aug 2013	2018
Japan	May 2012	2018

*Note the table order is a suggestion based on travel cost effectiveness; changes can be accommodated if required

4 Available Observer Data.

- 4.1 Table 1, 2 & 3 of the SC paper “*Status of ROP Data Management*” WCPFC-SC9-2013/ST IP-05 indicates the amount of data that has been entered and also highlights possible data gaps and other problems in receiving the data for entry. It is pointed out in the paper that determining the actual number of trips that they can expect data for is difficult.
- 4.2 Provisional purse-seine observer trips undertaken in 2010 -2011 were given at TCC9 with incomplete information overall for 2012, noting that approx 70% was only available at the time

of the TCC9 meeting. At the time of this report, an update (Oct 30th 2013) indicated that an estimated 94% of data has been received for 2012.

- 4.3 Indications were that there are a number of observer trips where data is not sent to SPC for entry. One reason given for not sending the data is that the data collected does not meet expectation, and is often not complete, therefore the provider does not believe the information collected by these observers is useful, and consequently does not send it to the data provider. SPC and the WCPFC Secretariat encouraged providers to send all ROP observers trip data they have rejected for whatever reason.
- 4.4 TCC9 recommended a time frame for submission of data, and where possible data should be sent to the Secretariat or the Commission Data providers within 100 days for purse seiners and 120 days for long liners. This time commences when the observer disembarks the vessel.

5 Data and monitoring requirements by the ROP of the Commission's CMM 2012-04 on the protection of Whale Sharks from Purse Seine operations;

- 5.1 Whale shark interaction has been monitored by observers for many years, since the early 90's mainly in the coverage of the US Treaty Fleet and the Federated States of Micronesia Arrangement vessels. The increase in reported interactions since 2010 is most likely due to the introduction of 100% purse seine coverage; this is best explained in the SC9 paper "*Spatial and temporal distribution of whale sharks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean based on observer data and other data sources WCPFC-SC9-2013/EB-WP-01*". There has been some anecdotal information from a couple of observers that they believe the method of dragging a Whale Shark from the nets by the tail, as suggested in the guidelines might actually be harmful to the Whale Shark.
- 5.2 CMM 2012-04 *Conservation and Management Measure for the protection of whale sharks from purse seine operations* enters into force on 1 January 2014, and requires that CCMs provide annual reports in Annual Report Part 1. The Secretariat notes that one CCM has included information on whale shark sets in their reporting of the FAD alternative reduction under CMM 2012-01.

6 Data Entry Staff "Pohnpei"

- 6.1 ROP data entry remains concentrated at the science data provider SPC in Noumea; approval was given at WCPFC9, to relocate two data entry personnel from the SPC regional office in Pohnpei to the Commission building in January 2013. The original two data entry persons were joined by two new data entry staff in April 2013, making a total of four data entry staff based in Pohnpei. The increase was approved at WCPFC9 and was required to handle the substantial amount of National Ocean Resource Management Authority (NORMA) observer data being generated by vessels entering Pohnpei port; previously the two original data entry staff could only cope with around 50% of the data received in Pohnpei. The data entered in Pohnpei will continue to be entered and compiled in secure offices for transmission to the SPC observer data base. The FSM Coordinator and other staff of the NORMA Observer programme and the Secretariat ROP meet regularly to make sure all data entry issues are discussed and resolved.

7. ROP Data Fields

- 7.1 Additional data fields to be added to the set of "Minimum Standard Observer Data Fields" were discussed at SC8, WCPFC9 and further discussed at SC9 & TCC9. There were four fields discussed, however there was only a requirement to add two fields as two were already being collected by observers. Fields for longline observer collected information added were:

- *the mass of added weight attached to branch lines,*
- *distance between weight and hook (in meters),*

- 7.2 The other two fields requested (dead, alive or injured) and number of seabirds for each species and whether the seabirds were released alive or discarded dead has been collected by observers for a number of years. To date there has been extremely low incidences of bird interactions reported by observers in the tropical areas.
- 7.3 SC9 Formed a “Small Group” to look at observer FAD data fields, and the collection of information on FADs by observers and vessels, the “Small Group” found that the data currently collected by observers was adequate, and no data field deletions were required.
- 7.4 The group did recommend that an extra field be added, that would have an observer try where possible to estimate the mesh size used in the constructions of FADs or any extensions hanging from the FAD. It was pointed out that this would be difficult to estimate if the FAD is in the water but could be obtained if the FAD was on the deck for deployment or servicing. SC9 agreed to this recommendation from the “Small Group” More information on this issue as well as recommendations on vessels supplying FAD information, is contained in the *SC 9 Summary Report Para 110*.
- TCC9 agreed that the following FAD Data Field will be added to the Minimum Standard Data fields to be collected by ROP observers;
- *Mesh size of netting used in the construction of a FAD, including any extensions.*
- 7.5 CCMs are encouraged to include the new data fields in para 7.1 and the approved FAD field recommended by SC9 and TCC9 in their data collection formats as soon as practical. A copy of all the Minimum Standard Data Fields required to be collected by ROP observers can be found on the ROP section of the WCPFC Website.

8 Observer Coverage Purse-Seine 2012

- 8.1 The Secretariat's role stated in CMM 2007-01 Para 12 (iii) “*receiving communications and providing reports on the ROP's operation to the Commission (and its subsidiary bodies); including target and achieved coverage levels;*” indicates that there is a requirement for the Secretariat to report on coverage levels achieved.
- 8.2 The observer coverage for Purse seiners for period Jan 1st to Dec 31st 2012 includes the FAD closure period for 2012; (Table 2). The coverage was monitored by the Secretariat as best possible with information supplied by observer providers and flag States for purse seine vessels when fishing in the Convention area 20N – 20S.
- 8.3 It was suggested in the 4th ROP report that a system be put in place, where observer providers be asked to send in monthly information on ROP observer placements on a mandatory basis; (No outcome came from this suggestion). Without this independent information being sent to the Commission Secretariat there is no way of verifying that there is 100% observer coverage of all purse seine fleets.
- 8.4 TCC9 could not come to a final agreement on this issue however many considered that Flag States be asked to send on a voluntary basis to the Commission Secretariat within a quarterly basis a report of observer placement information in which they have been involved. (Reporting requirement. should include the name of the observer, name and call sign of the vessel, date of placement and date of disembarkation of the ROP observer.
- 8.5 The coverage information received by the Commission Secretariat is extremely important for our data providers SPC to assist them to understand more precisely the amount of data and trips by ROP observers they should receive for both purse seiners and long liners.
- 8.6 Data on placements sent to the Commission Secretariat, should include the name of the observer, name and call sign of the vessel, date of placement and date of disembarkation.

- 8.7 There were a small amount of trips where the information received did not enable us to confirm that observers were on all vessels at all times. These discrepancies were crossed checked and in most (not all) instances the vessels were found to have had observers on board, but had not been recorded correctly or were not recorded by the provider or the flag State.
- 8.8 TCC9 could not reach agreement on requirements for reporting of observer placement information to the secretariat to meet its obligation under the CMM 2007-01 para 12 (iii) on monitoring observer coverage. Many CCMs indicated that it was a flag state responsibility to secure observer coverage, and therefore it should be the responsibility of the flag State to report observer placement information to the Secretariat. A few CCMs agreed that it was helpful for both to provide this information, it was also felt by most CCMs that a quarterly report would be not as onerous, the Secretariat confirmed information on a quarterly basis would be useful but countries that wished to send information on a timelier basis would assist in keeping the tables current.
- 8.9 Following the discussion and failure to reach Consensus on this matter. The Secretariat will continue to compile the coverage reports and asks all providers and particularly flag states to provide information on at least a quarterly basis to the Secretariat on a voluntary basis.
- 8.10 The opening of the High Seas pockets to the Philippine fleet saw a modest start as the fleet waited until after the 2012 FAD closure period before commencing fishing in the HS-1 pocket. Philippine had advised they were permitting 36 vessels to fish in this area; however the figure at the commencement of fishing for the 2012 period saw a total of 11 catcher vessels being monitored, with only 8 being in the area at one time. The Commission Secretariat understands that before being permitted to fish in the HS-1 pocket vessels BFAR required that vessels get permission from BFAR, including that they were fully compliant with observer coverage requirements.
- 8.11 Table 2 shows the observer coverage by fleet during the period Jan - Dec 2012 -Table 2a is an indicative table for Jan –Oct 2013 and will be updated for 2013 in the 6th Annual ROP Report.

Table 2 – Observer Coverage of Purse Seine Vessels Jan –Dec 2012

Vessel Flag	Vessel* No.	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CN	12-15	12	12	12	12	12	12	8	8	10	11	13	13
EC	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	2	2	3	4	6	7
EU	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	4	4	4
FM	8-9	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	5	7	8	8
JP	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	29	25	33	33	31	33
KI	9	7	7	8	9	9	9	7	5	6	9	9	9
KR	29-28	26	26	25	24	24	24	25	26	25	26	26	27
MH	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	9	8	7	10	10
NZ	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	4
PG**	14-11	4	4	4	4	4	4	8	9	9	9	8	5
PH**	4-11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	8
SB	2-1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SV	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
TV	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
TW	34-38	33	33	33	32	31	31	34	33	33	34	34	33
US	33-39	32	33	30	33	33	33	37	36	37	38	38	36
VU	16	15	15	16	16	16	16	15	16	15	15	15	15
Total	227- 243	202	203	201	202	201	201	191	183	194	207	216	215

*Vessel No, figures indicate the starting number of vessels in Jan 2012 and the increase or decrease in numbers to Dec 2012 for the same fleet.

** A number of vessels fished domestically during the period and are not included in the ROP coverage table

Notes:

- A number of vessels reflagged during the period of the tables, and the tables indicate the vessels current flag State for the whole period of the tables.
- Where there is a lesser coverage number than the total vessels, in most cases information given indicated that vessels not fishing were in shipyards or tied up for maintenance.
- The FAD closure period saw a drop in vessel activity for some fleets due to vessels shifting from the WCPO to the Eastern Pacific for the period. The closure also saw an increase in vessels going to shipyards/maintenance for the period.

Table 2a* Indicative Observer Coverage of Purse Seine Vessels Jan – Oct 2013

Vessel Flag	No.	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
CN	15	13	14	14	14	14	14				
EC	9	8	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6
EU	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
FM	9	8	8	8	7	7	8	1	1		1
JP	37	32	32	32	35	33	24	22	24	29	27
KI	9	9	8	8	7	7	8	1	1	2	1
KR	28	27	27	27	27	27	27	4	4	4	4
MH	10	9	9	10	8	8	6			1	6
NZ	4	2	1	1	1	1	1		2	2	2
PG	11	5	7	5	2	2	2				
PH	36**	6	1	7	6	6	5				
SB	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
SV	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			2	2
TV	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
TW	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
US	40	36	35	36	37	38	38	15	18	27	27
VU	19	15	14	9	9	9	9				
Total	233	205	201	196	194	193	184	87	94	111	114

* Table is only indicative, as coverage for some fleets has yet not been fully supplied for 2013.

** Total vessels eligible to be authorised for HS-1 pocket as supplied by Philippines.

9 Observer Coverage - Long Line 2012

- 9.1 Coverage rates for long liners has been set at 5% and this was to be achieved by 30 June 2012, (CMM 2007-01 Annex C Para 6); long line data being received by the WCPFC data provider (SPC) indicates that data for many fleets has not been made available. This may be because it has been collected and not forwarded to the data provider or there has not been the required 5% coverage.
- 9.2 The coverage information sent by providers or flag States on long line coverage is difficult to monitor and verify; A simpler system of coverage for long liners is required. Currently 5% coverage is based on the number of trips. The fleet sizes and number of trips a fleet carries out is virtually impossible to monitor; as pointed out at earlier WCPFC meetings, a trip on a LL vessel can be from a few days to over a year. A suggestion is to consider different simpler method of coverage for Long liners and Pole and line vessels.
- 9.3 A paper on a coverage method for longliners was presented at the TCC9 meeting in Paper *WCPFC-TCC9-2013-09*; Consideration were given to the guidelines in this paper to ensure the coverage level required for long liners is achieved however no consensus was attained and the matter is to be reviewed for TCC10.
- 9.4 It is reminded that IWGROP determined that there are no vessel size exemptions for the placement of observers on long liners, and that placement of observers is based on safety and the ability of an observer to be able to work on a vessel without unduly hindering the operation of the vessel.

10 Transshipment Coverage 2012

- 10.1 Monitoring of 'Fish Carriers' receiving product at sea by long liners commenced in 2011; with observer coverage being monitored by the Commission Secretariat. Fish carriers that the Commission ROP is aware of carrying out transshipment at sea are vessels that the Secretariat has been informed by the CCM or directly by the vessel that it intends to carry out transshipment at sea.
- 10.2 As reported previously, there continues to be a problem in knowing the intentions of fish carriers coming into or operating in the Convention Area. Without a proper notification scheme it is difficult for the Commission Secretariat to understand how many carriers intend to transship on the high seas or at sea in an EEZ, or whether the vessel intends going to a designated port for transshipment.
- 10.3 VMS checks on carriers show that many do not have observers when they are viewed on the high seas however it is not known if these carriers are transiting to ports to tranship therefore not requiring an observer, or whether they intend to tranship at sea either in a EEZ or on the high seas.
- 10.4 The limitations of the WCPFC VMS to the high seas make it impossible for the Commission to track carriers throughout the Convention Area. Therefore transshipping maybe occurring at sea inside national zones with no reports being received, or if received by the individual member countries no regional analysis of this data is available. Table 3 indicates that there have been 18 different carriers who have sent the Secretariat reports for multiple trips that they are transshipping at sea in the Convention area. These carriers have carried 36 different observers for the period Jan 1st 2012 – Dec 31st 2012.
- 10.5 Information on Transshipment including species transhipped are *included in the Annual Report on WCPFC high seas transshipment reporting WCPFC-TCC9-2013/RP05*

Table 3 - List of Carriers sending reports to WCPFC Secretariat Jan-Dec 2012

Carrier Flag State	Number of Fish Carriers reported their intentions to conduct Transshipment Activities on the High Seas of the WCPFC Convention Area.	Number of Observer used for trips made in the Convention Area by the Fish Carriers
Kiribati	4	6
Korea	1	3
Panama	1	4
Vanuatu	12	23
Total	18	36

Letters of Indemnity –

- 10.6 TCC9 was informed that a minor number of carriers are still asking observers to sign letters of indemnity. This issue was raised in the Executive Directors report at TCC9 where it was reminded that the rights and responsibilities of the Captain Crew and Observer are contained in CMM 2007-01 for the Regional Observer Programme; The legal advice on this matter remains the same as last advised that an ROP observer does not have to sign these letters. A vessel cannot ask observers to sign away their responsibilities, rights and duties. A circular to members regarding this issue was sent out on 20th July 2012. (*Refer WCPFC Circular 2012-49*)

Transshipment Observer Forms

10.7 Forms for use by observers on transshipment vessels have been created and have been available on the ROP section of the WCPFC Website as a guide for programmes for quite a while. The forms FC-1, FC-2 & FC-3 have been accepted by the FFA/SPC Data Consultative Committee (DCC) to be used by FFA/SPC certified observers when on carriers. Previously observers did not use forms and instead recorded all data in an unformatted manner in journals. It was also recommended by the FFA/SPC Regional Coordinators Workshop that the FC-1 to FC-3 forms should be developed into an observer workbook for carriers. The Secretariat as part of the ROP responsibilities will design a work book as a guide for observers on carriers.

Transshipment Observer Debriefing

10.8 A transshipment debriefing process for observers will be developed by the ROP section of Secretariat in 2014, noting that all data involving observers on carriers transshipping on the high seas should be forwarded to the WCPFC Secretariat.

Transshipment Reporting Assistance

10.9 Several CCMs at TCC9 expressed support for the recommendation which requires fish carriers to report their intentions to the Secretariat when Carriers are entering the Convention Area and/or departing ports within the WCPFC Convention area. Also agreed by a few CCMs was that carriers on departure from port to conduct “at Sea” transshipments in the WCPFC Convention Area, Carriers are to report to the Commission Secretariat the name and provider of the observer on board; However following some other views on this issue TCC9 could not reach consensus on this matter and agreed to continue discussion on this matter at TCC10.

Transshipment Data and Monitoring

10.10 Discussion took place at TCC9 on the data and information collected by observers and the need to have this sent to the Secretariat as soon as practical after the observer disembarks the vessel. Noting that if the movements of all carriers were understood and being monitored it would be difficult for carriers to transship without observers on board. It was proposed that data and information collected by WCPFC ROP observers on Fish Carriers be sent by the ROP Provider of the observer to the Secretariat in a timely manner after the completion of the trip; To assist with understanding fish carrier movements, and to help eliminate fish carriers not required to have observers, the observer provider in each port was asked to report to the Secretariat; Name, Call-sign and flag of Carriers transshipping in their ports. However following some other views on this issue TCC9 could not reach consensus on this matter and agreed to continue discussion on this matter at TCC10.

11 Cross endorsement of observers

11.1 Training of observers by IATTC and WCPFC for the cross endorsement was held in RMI in May 2013, additional observers were trained to be able to carry out cross endorsement requirements on vessels wishing to fish in both the IATTC and WCPFC areas. There is a total 21 observers from FSM, Nauru, Kiribati and RMI with cross endorsement certification. These certified observers are able to carry out work in both Convention areas on the same trip; Further training of observers for cross endorsement is intended in 2014 and a small budget for this training will be included in this year’s ROP budget.

12 Observer availability

12.1 CMM 2008-01 - Conservation and Management Measure on Bigeye and Yellowfin Tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean introduced a requirement for 100% observer coverage for areas between 20N & 20S of the Convention area. Availability of observers was originally strained; however the training of new observers since the first days of the 100% observer

coverage is now adequate. A survey carried out in May 2013 indicated there were approximately 720 available observers across the ROP programmes for use as ROP observers.

12.2 The Pacific Island observer programmes managed to supply sufficient observers for the 100% observer coverage of purse seiners, however with 5% coverage of long liners and 100% coverage of carriers transshipping at sea and the usual attrition rate that occurs in observer programmes, observer training is required for most Pacific Island programmes on a continual basis.

12.3 Many non Pacific Island countries also are available to carry out coverage on purse seiners and long liners who only fish on the high seas, and it is important that the providers of observers for these vessels ensure their observers are collecting the data as required by the Commission and that all collected data is sent to SPC on a timely basis.

13 Observers for special situations

13.1 There has been previously an amount budgeted (\$30,000) for use when there is a special need for observers i.e. previous funding was used for observers during the initial phase of the spill sampling trials. With the trials on electronic monitoring, and also the need to carry out some independent observer coverage on the Philippine fleet fishing in the high seas pocket, a similar amount in the annual budget is sought to assist with these items.

14 Authorised observer providers to the ROP

14.1 A list of ROP authorised observer programmes and their coordinator contacts are available on the MSC - ROP section of the new WCPFC website. Authorised programmes are reminded to send any Coordinator changes as soon as they are known to keep this list up to date.

14.2 The authorisation process is explained in the IWGROP2 summary Para 81 -101; There was a time frame attached to the process to make sure that programme providers at the time were audited to ensure they were maintaining the Commission Standards. Since the deadline date of June 2012, there has been interest by new observer providers to authorise their programmes as part of the ROP; these programmes were created after the original June 2012 implementation deadline. The CMM 2007-01 gives the Secretariat the role of authorizing providers CMM 2007-01 12(b). Therefore the authorisation process developed at the IWGROP2 for the implementation of the ROP is also the same process being used by the Secretariat for future programmes wishing to be part of the ROP.

15 Electronic Data reporting

15.1 Observers will be involved in the trials of electronic reporting and monitoring, information on this is provided in paper *WCPFC TCC9 2013-15*

16 Catch Discard reporting

16.1 Purse seine vessels are required to retain all tuna species on board unless they are “unfit for human consumption” some CCMs at TCC9 pointed out that these reports if occurring in EEZ’s of member countries should be reported by the vessels to the designated person in those countries; If the vessel wishes to discard tunas on the high seas because they are unfit for human consumption, the vessel is required to submit to the Executive Director, a report on the discards within 48 hours. A total of 260 discards from 68 vessels were reported to the Secretariat during the period Jan – Dec, 2012, with insufficient well space on a final set being the major reason given for discarding tuna species. The catch discard reports have increased in 2013, with 80 vessels submitting 1083 discard reports from Jan 1st – August 25th 2013. However many of these were sent to the secretariat are not high seas catch retention reports and in future years the secretariat will only report on high seas catch retention reports. Further information on Catch Discards can be found in the SC9 paper “*Summary of Purse Catch*

17. Observer/Vessel problems & Observer trip monitoring summary

17.1 An “Observer Trip Monitoring Summary” is required by the minimum data standards of the Commission; to collect this information most of the Pacific Island countries use a form referred to as GEN -3. The observer on arriving in port and disembarking the vessel usually go through a debriefing process; this includes debriefing of the Gen-3 form. The form is not a written report but is an indicator of activities allegedly carried out by vessels and witnessed by the observer. The observer indicates by circling YES or NO to the questions on the form. If answered YES, the observer usually indicates in the comments section on the form where they have written the details on what they have witnessed. A response of ‘YES’ is an indicator only, and does not mean that there has been any infringement by a vessel. Table 4 is presented for member’s information on areas that observers have reported a Yes to the questions a) to t).

Table 4* Observer Trip Monitoring Summary

Question	Number of times “YES” reported	Estimated % of trips available
a) Record inaccurate positions on the vessel logsheet	9	2.5
b) Fish in areas that were not covered by any license or access agreement	1	0.28
c) Mis-report catch in the vessel logs or weekly reports	33	9.35
d) Not report catch of commercial species (including discards)	42	11.9
e) Not record bycatch and discards	72	20.4
f) Record bycatch and discards inaccurately	57	16.15
g) Target species other than those they are licensed to target	0	0
h) Use a fishing method other than the method they are licensed to use	0	0
i) Record one species as a different species	33	9.35
j) Catch species of special interest	24	6.8
k) Breach MARPOL regulations	45	12.75
l) Bunker or not report bunkering to national authorities	48	13.6
m) Transfer fish from or to another vessel at sea	6	1.7
n) Request that an event not be reported	12	3.4
o) Mistreat other crew	12	3.4
p) Hinder the observer in the carrying out of their duties	9	2.55
q) Not supply reasonable accommodation, food and facilities to the observer onboard the vessel	6	1.7
r) High grade or cull the catch	3	.85
s) Not report position to countries when crossing from one zone to another	6	1.7
t) Not display or present a valid (and current) license document onboard	9	2.55

Note: This table does not represent the total number of trips in the period Jan 1st to Dec 31st 2012 and represents 353 observed trips from across all fishing fleets. (Information as of 25th August 2013)

18 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

18.1 A number of items were listed to be discussed by the TAG however many of these were of a policy nature and therefore until an agreed policy is determined on these matters it is difficult for the TAG to discuss operational matters on the same issue. An example is the right of the captain to view the observer reports. This is a policy issue and when something is decided by the Commission on this issue the TAG then could develop operational protocols.

18.2 The following list of items was sent to the TAG coordinators for responses.

- a) Develop clear and standard observer credentials, e.g. ID cards for all ROP observers and develop a method to enable all ROP observers to able to attain this credential.

- b) Identifying mechanisms to prevent misconduct of observers on board vessels and when in port.
- c) Identifying an exit/entry or leaving port in the Convention area reporting process, to ensure all Carriers intending to tranship at sea have a certified ROP observer on board
- d) Streamlining data transmissions between the regional observer programs and the Commission and or SPC, also to assist develop a method that the SPC data providers to work out how many trips they need to receive data for each year
- e) Accommodation and onboard and facilitation for Female Observers
- f) Communications by Observers prior to arriving in foreign and home ports
- g) Notifications of newly trained observer to the Commission ROP.
- h) The FFA/SPC regional observer coordinators workshop asked that the TAG look at operational mechanisms to decrease incidents of corruption such as black mail, bribery and extortion.
- i) Inclusion in documentation handed out to observers when leaving for a trip of up to date summaries of CMMs that affect observer activities.

Responses and recommendations are included in TAG paper *WCPFC-TCC9-2013-14*

19. ROP Report Considerations and Recommendations;

The following recommendations were presented to TCC9 for consideration to improve the monitoring of the fleets that fish or tranship in the Convention area.

19.1 Continuation of ROP Audits

TCC9 agreed that a Continuation of ROP Audits to ensure WCPFC minimum standards are being maintained by ROP authorized programmes. The "Table 1" for the review schedule of ROP authorised observer providers over a period of the next 5 years was approved.

19.2 Observer Data

TCC9 agreed that ROP data as defined by the Convention and CMM 2007- 01 that is collected by ROP observers for all ROP trips regardless of what condition it is in must be sent to SPC or the Secretariat where possible within 100 days for purse seiners and 120 days for long liners after the disembarkation of the observer from the vessel.

19.3 Observer Coverage

TCC9 could not come to a final agreement on this issue however many considered that Flag States be asked to send to the Commission Secretariat within a quarterly basis a report of observer placement information in which they have been involved. (Reporting requirement. should include the name of the observer, name and call sign of the vessel, date of placement and date of disembarkation of the ROP observer.

19.4 ROP Transshipment Reporting Assistance and Transshipment Data and Monitoring

There was no agreement reached on this matter at TCC9, however further discussion on the information contained in Para 10.9 and 10.10 was recommended to be held over until TCC10.