



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
TWELFTH REGULAR SESSION**

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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION  
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS**

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**WCPFC-SC12-AR/CNM-34**

**PANAMA**

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA  
ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Scientific data was provided to the commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by 29th April 2011  Parte I. (Statistic and Fish information)	Our participation as CNM status was with activities of fishing support vessels
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### 1. Abstract/Summary

The Republic of Panama is located between 7 ° 12'07 " and 9 ° 38'46" North Latitude and 77 ° 09'24" and 03'07" 83 ° west longitude and has a length of 75.517 km<sup>2</sup> (29,208 square miles). Panama is the link between Central America and South America, and has coasts on the Caribbean and the Pacific, where emerging about 1, 581 islands and islets. The coasts add up to total 2,988.3 km, of which are 1.700.6 km and 1,287.7 km of the Pacific are in the Caribbean. Its territorial waters extend to about 200 nautical miles wide over which the Republic of Panama has sovereignty and sovereign rights, as in the seabed. This area is influenced by a large upwelling in the Gulf of Panama;

The fishery is divided into two major sectors: industrial and artisanal fisheries. There is also a fleet of vessels licensed to fish in international or high seas, mainly tuna in East Pacific and the Atlantic. Other species in EEZ waters includes: white shrimp pelagic, anchovies and herring and demersal fisheries, commercial, and background pelagic.

In Panama, the Caribbean coastal fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean is sectioned into areas such as Bocas del Toro, Colon and San Blas, where the continental shelf and steep cuts only allow fishing for reef-associated species, although has developed an industrial shrimp fishery is of low intensity. This traditional fishing area is principally engaged in the capture of lobster (*Panulirus* sp), shells (*Strombus* sp), octopus and crab spider crab. Of these the most important is fishing for lobster (*Panulirus* sp), resulting in the main fishery in the Caribbean region. However, in recent years have seen an increase in the overexploitation of the resource, which has led to adopt rules permitting and to the implementation of closures for some of these species.

Panama has made a major management control of its fishing vessels since 1997, which establishes the obligation to obtain a fishing license for fishing vessels on the high seas or EEZ of other States, with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) as mandatory for all fishing vessels and support fishing vessels.

Panama uses a vessel monitoring system (VMS) in all large scale Panamanian flag

vessels fishing in the Pacific and Atlantic, as in all fishing vessels Panamanian international license, established by Administrative Order No. 101-99 of four (4) August 1999. Since that year, Panama perform a vessel monitoring of all fishing vessels of international services.

In compliance with the decisions taken by Resolution A/RES/53/33 of 15 March 1999 General Assembly of the United Nations concerning fishing in large-scale drift-nets, the unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and high seas, bycatch and discards in fisheries and other matters; Republic of Panama established the Executive Decree No. 90 of July 17, 2002 "Through which prohibits the use gill nets and / or drift to all industrial fishing vessels domestic and international service under the Panamanian flag because it represents a major threat to the marine environment, the sustainability of fisheries and marine biodiversity. Since 1985 Panama, in accordance with these international instruments adopted programs to control illegal fishing by market states like the European Union and fisheries management organizations (RFMO's).

In the same year he joined the National Maritime Strategy, the need to establish a National Plan to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated.

In the context of regional fisheries management organization, CIAT, Panama as a contracting party since 1952, ratifies the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation by Act No. 75 of November 10, 1998.

As for the national fleet in the western Pacific Ocean, is made only for transport and support ships applying the General Law No. 44 of November 23, 2006, establishing the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) and adds a definition for fishing vessel and support fishing vessels for transport, transshipment and support fishing activities.

In November 2008 approved the Maritime Code of Panama, there is established as a prerequisite to register a fishing vessel in the register of the Merchant Marine, to obtain a fishing license. This has been a great achievement and, despite all efforts made during the past years, it is not until now that is adopted by the Republic Act requirement to obtain a fishing license, for any type of fishing boat ; previously required through an Executive Decree. Among the implemented rules, referred to in Annex I to this document, we find the definition of illegal unreported unregulated (IUU) and the explicit consideration of not granting fishing licenses to vessels that are under this condition.

## **2. Tabular Annual Fisheries Information**

We have no information of fisheries because there are not catch vessels in Western and Central Pacific Area.

## **3. Background**

The Republic of Panama is a cooperating non-Member of WCPFC, the number of vessels operating in this convention area are totally transport and support vessels. All of our vessels are licensed to operate in the WCPFC in compliance to the commission's recommendations and requirements. Also all authorized for High Seas Transshipment.

We have 108 vessels of transportation and support of fishing vessels. The Republic of Panama accept high seas boarding and inspection and has accepted 100% observer coverage if its necessary on its carriers and also the commitment to comply with all WCPFC CMM's.

## **4. Coastal State Reporting**

We are not a Coastal State in WCPFC Convention Area.

## **5. Socio-economic factors**

The benefits obtained to flag in Panama are in the country and generates many jobs also with the crews of the ships as well as the company profits that are in the country.

## **6. Disposal of Catch**

We don't have fishing vessels that catch in WCPFC Convention area.

## **7. Onshore Developments**

We are not a Coastal State and no processing plant or support facilities in WCPFC Convention area.

## **8. Future Prospect of the Fishery**

We have our position to maintain only transport and support fishing vessel with the possibility to develop the fishing activity in the future.

## **9. Status of the Tuna Fishery data collection systems**

Long sheet data collection and verification – Transport and support vessels are required to submit data on their area operations based on format for such reporting which include a detailed catch fishing vessels transshipment, and submitted for verification on a regular basis showing information regarding position, date, sets and species. All the operations are verified by our Fishing Monitoring Center.

## **10. Research Activities Covering Target and non-Target species**

Fisheries Information System: Panama reports statistics for all activities in the areas of Merchant Shipping, Ports, Seafarers and discharge data of fishery products in domestic and international ports.

The Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) is responsible for verifying the information captures and maintains landing, export, import of fishery products, and biometric information of the target species, which are important to support the country's fisheries development.

The ARAP maintains periodic sampling programs at ports landings by species and sizes. There are research centers, such as the Center for Marine Sciences and Limnology, University of Panama, which conducts research on specific estuarine systems and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), which focuses its studies on the biological area and conservation of marine ecosystems.

Also conducted joint research with CIAT-Achotines, which supports research of tropical tuna species, with the aim of closing the life cycle. Similarly, the Action Plan of the Southeast Pacific and the Caribbean Action Plan are programs Regional Seas Programme of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), supports research on environmental indicators and quality of coastal marine waters, which allow to address areas risk to ecosystems and marine species of commercial interest.

On the other hand, supported by the Ministry of Science of Spain develop fisheries research survey and monitoring inventories of stocks of fishery resources on continental shelves. All this contributes to better decision making regarding the sustainable management of fisheries resources and ecosystem.