# TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

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## 9th ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE REGIONAL OBSERVER PROGRAMME

**WCPFC-TCC13-2017-RP02**
**2 September 2017**

**Paper prepared by the Secretariat**

### Purpose

1. This paper presents as required the 9th Annual Report of the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (ROP) for the information and consideration of TCC13.

### Introduction

2. Paragraph 2 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."

3. 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."

4. Paragraph 12 of CMM 2007-01 on the "Role of the Secretariat" lists several ROP activities that the Secretariat is required to carry out.

5. This paper reports on the different aspects of the ROP as required by the Convention, CMM 2007-01 and the outcomes of WCPFC13

### General

6. The Secretariat continues to support observer and debriefer trainings, assistance was given on request to help CCM programmes with observer training. It continues also to assist national and sub- regional observer programmes on matters regarding provider and observer roles in relation to CMMs, Commission requirements, Commission minimum standards for the ROP, data collection and data entry requirements, monitoring of transshipment, publication of a CMM booklet for 2017 and other ROP observer issues. Since the last report the Secretariat's Observer Programme Coordinator has participated in several observer related meetings, workshops and training, such as the Regional Observer Coordinators Workshop, Data Collection Committee, IATTC/WCPFC Cross Endorsement observer training, and Indonesia and the Philippines observer training. WCPFC's participation at the Data Collection Committee, amongst others assisted Pacific Islands countries and territories with ensuring that Pacific Island data collection tools are suited to field data collection required by the Commission. ROP Audits were organized for 5 countries, and included a presentation on the Commission and observer programmes to students at the Shanghai University, China. The Secretariat continues to provide answers to many questions about CMM's and other issues involving observers to members and others to help them understand CMM's and other rules of the Commission. The Secretariat in 2017 has continued to expand its use of ROP observer data in the online WCPFC Compliance Case file system.

**ROP Audits**

7. The Secretariat continues to audit programmes in the second phase of the audits. A small budget each year to accommodate these reviews is required and the current budgetary provision should be sufficient if granted on a yearly basis. At the time of completing this paper, audits were completed in 2017 for China, Korea and PNG observer programmes, and there are plans to complete the audits for the programmes of Cook Islands and Chinese Taipei before the end of the year. The EU-Portugal Observer Programme is interim authorized to be part of the ROP and they need to be audited for full authorization. The 2nd phase of ROP auditing of programmes of Australia, New Zealand, PNA Office, Tuvalu, Palau, New Caledonia and Japan are intended during 2018

**Available Observer Data**

8. The paper on the *Status of ROP Data Management" WCPFC-SC13-ST-IP-02* presented at the Science Committee (SC13) on data management indicates the amount of data that has been entered and highlights possible data gaps and other problems in receiving the data for entry. Observer data received at SPC cover an estimated 99% (1,754 trips) of 2013 purse seine trips, an estimated 91% (1,796 trips) of trips undertaken in 2014 and an estimated 94% (1559 trips) of trips undertaken in 2015. The data for 2016 indicates 98% (1408 trips) has been received at SPC- *Reference Table 1 of WCPFC-SC13-ST IP-02.*

9. It is noted in the said that CCM's observer coverage for longline data is included as table 4 for 2016 longline in general, there has been a marginal increase in observer coverage for 2016 over 2015, noting that more data is still to be entered for 2016 and that may increase the longline coverage figures.

10. Members are reminded that it was agreed at WCPFC10, that a time frame for submission of observer collected data to the Secretariat or the Commission Data Provider (SPC) should normally occur within 100 days for purse seiners and 120 days for long liners. The time frame for carrier observation information data was suggested to be sent to the Commission Secretariat within 120 days.

**Data Entry Staff "Pohnpei"**

11. The Secretariat presently has three of four data entry positions filled. Data entry personal have been mainly entering data collected by FSM Observers, and the Japanese longline Observer Programmes. When this is completed the data entry staff continues to enter data sent by SPC to the Secretariat from other programmes.

12. The ROP Coordinator and the Data Quality Officer are involved regularly in offering advice and assistance to some of the data entry problems and questions.

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

13. Whale shark interactions between vessels in the WCPO have been monitored by Pacific observer programmes since the early 1990's. In recent years, in part as a response to the requirements of CMM 2012-04, the collected ROP observer data on whale sharks has been expanded to give a more detailed account of the interactions.

**Table 1 Whale shark 2013-2016**

| Year | Annual ROP Reports | Observer Reported Whale Shark Interactions/Landings and Sightings | Trips analyzed for each ROP Annual Report | Average number of ROP trips that an interaction occurs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2013 | 6th | 381 | 1235 | Every 3.24 trips |
| 2014 | 7th | 247 | 845 | Every 3.42 trips |
| 2015 | 8th | 128 | 932 | Every 7.28 trips |
| 2016 | 9th | 135 | 801 | Every 5.93 trips |

14. Table 1 shows the number of Whale Shark interactions landings and sightings reported in the annual ROP report against trips recorded on available ROP data, in 2016 there were 45 Whale sharks landed on deck (most were of a small size and came aboard in the brail); 84 interactions (generally these

were large sharks) with the net during the set; and 6 sightings. Observers on a few occasions reported that there were deliberate sets made on whale sharks associated with tuna; observers also reported that in some cases there was no attempt to get the animal out of the net until all the tuna had been brailed aboard; and in a few cases, observers reported this delay in trying to release the animal was detrimental to the health condition of the Whale Shark on release. Observers reported poor and damaging attempts when trying to release the animal including a few cases of dragging the animal from the net and leaving the ropes tied around the body and tail.

**Table 2 Whale Shark landings & interactions for 2016 based on ROP data as at August 1st 2017**

| Activity | Number | Released Alive and Healthy | Released Alive injured or Distressed | Alive Rope still tied on body | Deceased | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landings** | **45** | **39** | **0** | **0** | **4** | **2** |
| **Net Interactions** | **84** | **54** | **15** | **5** | **3** | **7** |
| **Sightings** | **6** | | | | | |

15. Observers also reported that many vessels made every attempt to release the sharks in a healthy condition and in some cases sacrificed the catch of tuna to ensure the shark was released alive and quickly. Some observers also reported that a few vessels made no attempts to release the shark and if there where was an attempt, it was not done in accordance with the observers understanding of the guidelines for safe release (https://www.wcpfc.int/doc/supplcmm-2012-04/guidelines-safe-release-encircled-animals-including-whale-sharks). As is noted in Secretariat paper *WCPFC-TCC13-2017-11C*, ROP observer data and the associated reports is a source of information for potential alleged infringements that are presently notified by the Secretariat for investigation by flag CCMs in the WCPFC online compliance case file system.

**Bird landing data recorded by National and ROP observers for 2016**

16. Table 3 shows available 2016 observer collected data which indicates birds recorded from observed long line trips and purse seine trips; there were many Black Footed Albatross & Laysan Albatross reported. Purse seine reported birds where not caught but landed on the vessel or were sighted around the vessel. The large number of Albatross recorded come from one observer programme that has 100% observer coverage on their long liners. Up to the time of this report no bird data from the New Zealand Observer programme had been entered.

**Table 3 Observer Reported Bird Catches for 2016 based on ROP data as at August 1st 2017**

| Gear | Species | Number Recorded | Alive | Dead | Sighted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PS | Bird (Unidentified) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| PS | Northern Giant Petrel | 8 | 8 | 0 | 8 |
| LL | Petrels and Puffins | 7 | 1 | 6 | |
| LL | Short-Tailed Shearwater | 4 | 0 | 4 | |
| LL | Bird (Unidentified) | 5 | 1 | 4 | |
| LL | Laysan Albatross | 46 | 23 | 23 | |
| LL | Black-Footed Albatross | 119 | 32 | 87 | |
| | **Total Birds Caught** | **190** | **57** | **124** | |

**Turtles recorded by observers for 2016**

17. Available 2016 observer data from 252 long line trips and 801 Purse seine trips indicates there were 165 observed turtle landing and non-landed interactions recorded by observers on purse seiners and on long liners.

18. Table 4 shows the number of reported landings/interactions and the condition of the turtle when released. The table also indicates interactions with purse seine nets, this is where the turtle is seen in the net but not landed; Many of these turtles were assisted out of the net by crew, either jumping into the water and

manhandling the turtle over the cork line; or by using a dip net to lift the turtle over the cork line. Turtles landed on deck were in most cases carefully handled and were generally released in the same condition as they were when landed; unfortunately, there were 32 reported as deceased, most of these were from long line captures where the turtles were dead on landing. Only 1 death was confirmed on a purse seiner where a small green turtle was not seen and went through the power block with the net.

**Table 4.Turtles landed on Longline & Purse Seine for 2016 based on ROP data as at August 1st 2017**

| Gear | Species | Number Observed | Released Alive Before landing | Discarded after landing | Number Discarded Alive | Number Dead | Unknown Condition |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LL | Flatback Turtle | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| LL | Green Turtle | 13 | 0 | 13 | 9 | 4 | |
| LL | Hawksbill Turtle | 7 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 3 | |
| LL | Leatherback Turtle | 10 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| LL | Loggerhead Turtle | 31 | 0 | 31 | 21 | 4 | 6 |
| LL | Marine Turtle (Unidentified) | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| LL | Olive Ridley Turtle | 31 | 0 | 31 | 13 | 18 | |
| PS | Green Turtle | 20 | 7 | 13 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| PS | Hawksbill Turtle | 9 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | |
| PS | Leatherback Turtle | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| PS | Loggerhead Turtle | 11 | 1 | 10 | 9 | 0 | 1 |
| PS | Marine Turtle (Unidentified) | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | |
| PS | Olive Ridley Turtle | 21 | 8 | 13 | 13 | 0 | |
| | **Totals** | **165** | **25** | **140** | **95** | **32** | **13** |

## Sharks

19. Two CMMs with no-retention requirements have been agreed by the Commission CMM 2013-08(Silky Sharks) and CMM 2011-04 (Ocean White Tip Sharks). Table 5 for Silky Sharks and Table 6 for Ocean White Tip shark's shows LL and PS catches recorded by observers for the 2016 period and entered in the ROP data base and ROP data supplied to the WCPFC Secretariat by SPC the data provider. The data is for 801 purse seine and 252 LL trips and despite the CMM requirements, the reporting by observers indicates potential non-compliance by vessels with the CMM requirements.

**Table 5 Silky Sharks Reports based on ROP data as at 1 August 2017**

| 2016 Period | Number Caught | Discarded Body, Fins Retained | Body and Fins Retained | Condition when Cut off or Discarded | | | Total Cut off before landing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Alive | Dead | Unknown | |
| Jan 1 –Dec 31 Purse-seine | 32643 | 97 | 41 | 3494 | 17573 | 11438 | 0 |
| Jan 1 – Dec 31 Long line | 1467 | 0 | 4 | 1155 | 308 | 0 | 770 |
| **Total** | **34110** | 97 | 45 | 4649 | 17881 | 11438 | 770 |

**Table 6 Ocean White Tipped Sharks Reports based on ROP data as at 1 August 2017**

| 2016 Period | Number Caught | Discarded Body, Fins Retained | Body and Fins Retained | Condition when Cut off or Discarded | | | Total Cut off before landing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Alive | Dead | Unknown | |
| Jan 1 –Dec 31 Purse seine | 190 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 76 | 54 | 0 |
| Jan 1 – Dec 31 Long line | 441 | 1 | 0 | 275 | 37 | 128 | 195 |
| **Total** | **631** | 1 | 0 | 335 | 113 | 182 | 195 |

20. Table 7&7a show the totals for each observer report for the years since the CMM 2011-04 (Ocean White Tip Sharks) became active on Jan 1st 2013 and the CMM 2013-08(Silky Sharks) which became active 1st July 2014, the tables indicate that adherence to the CMMs has improved since the implementation of the CMM's, but that a few vessels are still not adhering to the CMM. ROP observer data and the associated reports is a source of information for alleged infringements that are presently notified by the Secretariat in the WCPFC online compliance case file system (see Secretariat paper *WCPFC-TCC13-2017-11C*).

**Table 7 Silky Sharks Shark Catch Reports based on ROP data as at 1 August 2017**

| 2014-2016 Total Observed Silky Sharks | Number Caught | Discarded Body, Fins Retained | Body and Fins Retained | Condition when Cut off or Discarded | | | Total Cut off before landing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Alive | Dead | Unknown | |
| 2014 year total | **39905** | 994 | 1642 | 487 | 4788 | 31994 | 0 |
| 2015 year total | **32782** | 190 | 525 | 4142 | 15716 | 12209 | 52 |
| 2016 9th ROP Report | **34110** | 97 | 45 | 4649 | 17881 | 11438 | 770 |

**Table 7(a) Oceanic Whitetip Sharks Catch Reports based on ROP data as at 1 August 2017**

| 2013-2016 Total Observed Oceanic White Tip Shark | Number Caught | Discarded Body, Fins Retained | Body and Fins Retained | Condition when Cut off or Discarded | | | Total Cut off before landing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Alive | Dead | Unknown | |
| 2013 | **584** | 62 | 58 | 86 | 69 | 309 | 38 |
| 2014 | **586** | 27 | 69 | 154 | 87 | 249 | 47 |
| 2015 | **759** | 10 | 21 | 252 | 231 | 245 | 48 |
| 2016 9th ROP Report | **631** | 1 | 0 | 335 | 113 | 182 | 195 |

**Cetaceans**

21. Many different species of whales and dolphins were observed by the ROP observer. Special on deck ID Guides produced by SPC allowed for a more accurate identification of each animal.

22. Table 8 shows Cetacean interaction data for 252 long line trips and 801 observed purse seine trips, interactions reported included instances where animals swam around the outside of the net after it was set and waited for escaping fish, other interactions reported the animals waited after the set completion to be fed by crew, in these cases the animal would come to the vessels after the net had been hauled in and the set finished, and wait for the crew to throw them discards. Bow wave riding, especially by dolphins was observed as an interaction in several observer reports. Another observation made was many whales would congregate outside the nets during the hauling and wait for the fish to escape or be thrown away as discards.

23. Animals caught in the net included the larger whales, that usually escaped by their own methods by creating their own holes in the net to escape, or as reported in many cases the vessel crew would assist the animals to escape the net, either by pulling them out by a rope, or dropping the net so they could swim out. There were several reports of some whales deliberately coming into the net and feeding on the catch and then they would go up to the cork line and push it down by themselves to swim over, indicating that some whales have learnt to use Purse seine sets for feeding.

24. Unfortunately a few species, mainly False Killer Whales and Rough Tooth Dolphins were caught in the net and by the time they were discovered in the net, they were already deceased. The interactions see very few landings and see many Cetaceans being released alive as vessels do seem to be more aware of the requirements and are assisting these animals in many ways to escape

25. The reporting by observers indicates interactions by vessels with cetaceans that may not be in compliance with CMM requirements. ROP observer data and the associated reports is a source of information for alleged infringements that are presently notified by the Secretariat in the WCPFC online compliance case file system (refer to *WCPFC-TCC13-2017-11C*).

**Table 8: Whale and Dolphin 2016 encounters reported by ROP observers.**

| Species | **Interaction inside net or landed (escaped or released alive | Interacted or landed (Dead) | Interacted or landed Unknown | *Sightings or interaction outside the net |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Baleen Whale** | 2 | | | 4 |
| **Beaked Whale** | 0` | ` | ` | 2 |
| **Blue Whale** | 1 | | | 0 |
| **Bottle Nose Dolphin** | 25 | | | 14 |
| **Brides Whale** | 39 | | | 11 |
| **Common Dolphin** | 0 | | | 2 |
| **Dolphin Spotted** | 2 | 1 | | 2 |
| **Dolphin unidentified** | 9 | | | 1 |
| **False Killer Whale** | 76 | 38 | | 106 |
| **Ginko Toothed Whale** | 2 | | | 7 |
| **Humpback Whale** | 3 | | | 6 |
| **Ind/Pac Bottle Nose** | 0 | | | 3 |
| **Killer Whale** | 1 | | | 5 |
| **Long Beaked Com** | 0 | | | 1 |
| **Melon Headed Whale** | 1 | | | 6 |
| **Minke Whale** | 2 | | | 5 |
| **Pygmy Killer Whale** | 3 | | | 7 |
| **Pygmy Sperm Whale** | 3 | | | 4 |
| **Rissos Dolphin** | 2 | | | 2 |
| **Rough Tooth Dolphin** | 14 | 36 | 1 | 1 |
| **Sei Whale** | 27 | 4 | | 40 |
| **Short Finned Pilot Whale** | 11 | 2 | | 59 |
| **Sperm Whale** | 0 | | | 9 |
| **Spinner Dolphin** | 2 | | | 15 |
| **Striped Dolphin** | 2 | | | 1 |
| **Unknown Identification** | 13 | | | 0 |
| **Totals** | **237** | **81** | **1** | **313** |

*. * it should be noted that that one sighting can involve multiple animals, observers have recorded a sighting of the species, but not the numbers sighted, therefore the figures represent the number of individual sightings recorded by observers not the number of animals.*

*** Interaction inside net or landed (escaped or released alive) figures attempt to show actual numbers released, however in a few cases observers made a report involving a few animals without giving actual numbers, these are entered as one interaction, therefore the actual number of animals released alive would be higher than the figures given.*

## ROP Data Fields and subsequent observer training requirements

26. WCPFC12 agreed to additional data fields and instructional changes to the Commission "Observer Minimum Standard Data Fields" collected by observers when aboard purse seiners and long liners. There were also some data additions and changes requested at WCPFC13. In early 2017, the Secretariat duly incorporated WCPFC13 agreed changes into the ROP Minimum Standard Data Fields that is published on the WCPFC website:- https://www.wcpfc.int/regional-observer-programme

27. The Secretariat observes that there can be delays in observer programmes being able to duly implement the agreed updates of ROP data fields for observer collection. For example, it takes time for the data fields to be added into the observer databases or observer data collection E-technologies, or if using paper forms the new or changed fields and instructions in the Observer workbooks or forms need to be formatted and must be printed and distributed for observer use.

## Observer Coverage Purse-Seine 2016

28. Observer coverage was monitored by the Secretariat with information supplied by observer providers and flag States for purse seine vessels when fishing in the Convention area 20N – 20S. Due to a small number of providers and Flag CCMs that did not provide information on their observer placements;

available data had to be cross-referenced by Flag CCM against provider placements. The Secretariat could not verify all placements and is also is unable to confirm positively that every purse seine vessel carried an observer during 2016. Members are reminded that they are required to submit information on ROP observer placements to the Secretariat to assist in monitoring the required 100% coverage of purse seine vessels fishing 20N to 20 S. Table 9 indicates ROP trips for 2016; noting that for some fleets which may have fished in their own waters for part of, for the whole year, are not included in this coverage report. The table unfortunately is not complete because of the failure of some programmes in forwarding information on their placements and vessels to the Secretariat

**Table 9 – Available Purse Seine Observer Coverage of Vessels Jan - Dec 2016**

| CCM | PS Fished ROP | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| China | 16 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 15 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| Federated States of | 17 | 11 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 15 |
| Japan | 24 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 14 |
| Kiribati | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Korea Republic of) | 27 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| Marshall Is. | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Papua New Guinea | 19 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 12 | 12 |
| Philippines | 17 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 13 |
| Solomon Is. | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Tuvalu | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese Taipei | 32 | 27 | 26 | 27 | 31 | 30 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 28 | 28 |
| USA | 34 | 7 | 7 | 22 | 27 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 32 | 31 | 32 |
| Vanuatu | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| El Salvador | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ecuador | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| European Union | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | 209 | 137 | 142 | 162 | 174 | 184 | 181 | 178 | 182 | 181 | 184 | 176 | 178 |

**Observer Coverage - Long Line 2016**

29. Coverage rates for long liners are set at 5%, using one of the approved and agreed metrics for long line coverage. A ROP coverage rate of 5% was to be achieved by 30 June 2012. However, many programmes have struggled to achieve this coverage rate for various reasons; the figures included in paper WCPFC-SC13-2017/ST IP-02 shows coverage with the different fleets Noting that some fleets fish domestically and may not have had observers placed on ROP trips.

30. 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. Since the last TCC a lot of work has been carried out on the potential of using Electronic Monitoring (EM) as a mechanism to help attain the 5% observer coverage.

**Cross Endorsement of observers**

31. There are approximately 70 observers from Pacific island countries with IATTC/WCPFC cross endorsement certification. These certified observers can carry out work in both Convention areas on the same trip on vessels approved to fish in both Convention areas. Training was held in Vanuatu in 2016 and FSM in 2017; further training will be required in 2018. Cross endorsed trained observers are currently in high demand with some vessels wishing to cross over to the IATTC area on a regular basis. Observers on these trips operate under the PIRFO formats designed by SPC/FFA and continue to use this format for the complete trip, however when in IATTC waters they may be required to fill out extra forms for IATTC in areas of Dolphin catches and other IATTC reporting requirements.

32. The course held in FSM early in 2017 saw 20 new cross endorsed observers trained from Pohnpei Yap, Kosrae, Palau, RMI and Fiji. The course was funded by WCPFC, and WCPFC is grateful for the repeat year supplementary support provided by FFA to enable additional participants to attend this and last year's course.

33. A further training session of WCPFC observers for cross endorsement is also intended to be held in 2018.

**Observer availability**

34. The Pacific Island ROP's managed to supply observers for the 100% observer coverage of purse seiners, however with 5% coverage of long liners and 100% coverage of carriers transshipping in the high seas of the Convention Area, as well as the usual attrition rate that occurs in observer programmes, training is required for most observer programmes on a continual basis. Non-Pacific Island countries of the Commission also have available observers that are being used in ROP trips to collect data as required by the Commission. There have been many observers trained over the years and many have remained with the programmes but a large number have left for different reasons, and the availability in all countries continually needs to be updated. Funding for training is an issue in some countries and allowances in local budgets need to be made to fund courses.

**Authorised observer providers to the ROP**

35. A list of ROP authorised observer programmes and their coordinator contacts are available on the MSC - ROP section of the WCPFC website (http://www.wcpfc.int/regional-observer-programme); authorised programmes are reminded of the requirement (CMM 2007-01 paragraph 13) to send observer coordinator changes as soon as they are known, to keep this list up to date.

**CMM Booklet for Observers**

36. Following WCPFC13 this was updated in Jan 2017 to include all the appropriate CMMs that are applicable in 2017 then the booklet was printed and distributed to all programmes. The booklet highlights some of the issues that will assist observers in understanding the CMMs and the importance of the data they are collecting. It was found that the observer CMM booklet was also sought by vessel captains as these CMMs were also relevant to their operations and several non-English speaking countries have supplied translated versions of the observer CMM booklet for their captains.

37. Cost involved in printing and freight were within the new budget allocation. Delivery costs being the main expenditure item; Direction will be sought from programmes on whether the booklet will require as many copies as was issued to programmes in 2017, many programmes are embracing electronic reporting and electronic versions will be available for down load to any observer tablets. An electronic version of the handbook, as well as a complete compendium of CMMs can be downloaded from the WCPFC website. https://www.wcpfc.int/regional-observer-programme

**IWG-ROP**

38. It was recommended to WCPFC12 that the IWG-ROP not be activated, unless there is any urgent matter raised by members during a SC or TCC requiring the IWG-ROP to be reformed.

**WCPFC Observer Trip Monitoring Summary with notes on the corresponding FFA/SPC GEN-3 codes**

39. An "Observer Trip Monitoring Summary" is part of the minimum data standards of the Commission; the Pacific Island observer programmes use work books that contain a general form "GEN -3" that is used as a "Trip Monitoring Summary". 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. A response of 'YES' is an indicator only, and does not indicate that there has been any infringement by a vessel. The observers will include in their written report the reasons "Yes" was circled. Table 10 represents data as available by Aug 1st 2017 entered for 252 long line trips and 801 Purse seine trips observed from across all fishing fleets for 2016

40. The observer reported information summarized in the table below and as is contained in the Observer Trip Monitoring Summary indicate that there may be a number of alleged issues that require further investigation by the responsible flag CCM. As is noted in Secretariat paper *WCPFC-TCC13-2017-11C*, the Observer Trip Monitoring Summary data is a source of information for alleged infringements that are presently notified by the Secretariat in the WCPFC online compliance case file system.

**Table 10 Summary of observer reported data in 2016**

| Item reported | Corresponding GEN-3 code | Times Yes indicated | % of total reports |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Observer Rights and Social Behaviour*** | | | |
| *Did the operator or any crew member assault, obstruct, resist, delay, refuse boarding to, intimidate or interfere with observers in the performance of their duties* | ***RS -a*** | 20 | 1.9 |
| *Request that an event not be reported by the observer* | ***RS -b*** | 18 | 1.7 |
| *Did the operator fail to provide observer, while onboard, at no expense to observer or the observer's Government, with food, accommodation, access to safety gear and medical facilities of reasonable standard - equivalent to those normally available to an officer onboard the vessel* | ***RS -d*** | 16 | 1.5 |
| ***National Regulations*** | | | |
| *Fish in areas where the vessel is not permitted to fish* | ***NR-a*** | 22 | 2.1 |
| *Use a fishing method other than the method the vessel was designed or licensed* | ***NR-c*** | 8 | .08 |
| *Transfer or transship fish from or to another vessel* | ***NR-e*** | 39 | 3.7 |
| ***WCPFC CMMS*** | | | |
| *Fail to comply with any Commission Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs)* | ***WC-a*** | 92 | 8.7 |
| *High-grade the catch* | ***WC-b*** | 19 | 1.8 |
| ***Log Sheet Recording Position & Catch*** | | | |
| *Inaccurately record vessel position on vessel log sheets for sets, hauling and* | ***LP-a*** | 13 | 1.2 |
| *Fail to report vessel positions to countries,* where required when *entering and leaving an EEZ* | ***LP-b*** | 12 | 1.1 |
| *Inaccurately record retained 'Target Species" in the Vessel logs* | ***LC-a*** | 276 | 26.2 |
| *Inaccurately record 'Target Species" Discards* | ***LC-b*** | 433 | 41.1 |
| *Record target species inaccurately* | ***LC-c*** | 316 | 30.0 |
| *Inaccurately record bycatch species discards* | ***LC-d*** | 446 | 42.4 |
| *Inaccurately record retained bycatch Species* | ***LC-e*** | 169 | 16.0 |
| ***Species of Special Interest - Marine mammals turtles seabirds or whale sharks)*** | | | |
| Interact with non-target species | ***SI-b*** | 310 | 29.4 |
| ***Pollution*** | | | |
| *Dispose of any metals, plastics, chemicals or old fishing gear* | ***PN-a*** | 253 | 24.0 |
| *Discharge any oil* | ***PN-b*** | 69 | 6.6 |
| *Lose any fishing gear* | ***PN-c*** | 12 | 1.1 |
| *Abandon any fishing gear* | ***PN-d*** | 62 | 5.9 |
| *Fail to report any abandoned gear* | ***PN-e*** | 10 | 0.9 |
| *Fail to monitor international safety frequencies* | ***SS-a*** | 6 | 0.6 |

41. The Secretariat was tasked at WCPFC12 to work with SPC-OFP in developing an online solution for providing advance notification to flag States of alleged infringements reported on observer trip monitoring summary. As advised to TCC12, this was partially delivered in 2016 through the Observer Obstruction Alleged Infringement list in the WCPFC online compliance case file system. The Secretariat completed its tasking on 1 May 2017, through the inclusion of the ROP Pre-Notification Issues list in the WCPFC online compliance case file system.

42. The Secretariat also notes that there were changes made to the GEN-3 form used by the Pacific Islands observer programmes at the last Data Collection Committee (DCC) in December 2016. The forms and the fields have been reformatted to add requirements recommended by the Commission to assist in the implementation of the WCPFC12 pre-notification decision.

43. Of concern are trips where observers reported some sort of obstruction, intimidation and interference of the observer in allowing him or her to carry out their normal duties, whilst the percentages are lower than the last year's report. Of the 20 reports of (RS-a) the major interference report was not allowing observers to record information required from vessel instrumentation. The 20 Reports were made by observers on 18 different longline or purse seine vessels. These and other pre-notification responses of 'YES' which are

noted in ROP data are presently notified by the Secretariat in the WCPFC online compliance case file system for flag CCM investigation.

**Observer Safety**

44. At WCPFC13, the Commission adopted CMM 2016-03 for the "Protection of WCPFC Regional Observer Programme Observers" and indicate the requirements that Observer Providers, Flag States and Vessels are to follow if an observer dies, is missing or presumed fallen overboard, suffers from a serious illness or injury that threatens his or her health or safety, or if an observer has been assaulted, intimidated, threatened, or harassed such that their health or safety is endangered. At WCPFC13, there were also new minimum standards adopted for ROP observer programmes to support safety of observer.

45. To support the implementation of CMM 2016-03, commencing in 2017, the Secretariat has begun checking during Audits and other opportune national visits to ensure the safety measures for observers are in place. These new WCPFC standards are being recognized across the globe as a minimum standard that should be used for observer safety in all programmes. The Secretariat is working with observer programmes that are presently working to implement the minimum standards at the time of writing this report in August 2017. If any programme is having problems in implementation of this standard, it can contact the sub regional bodies i.e. FFA and PNA as well the ROP section of the WCPFC Secretariat for assistance if it is required. This standard must be adhered to ensure the safety of observers at sea.

46. The Secretariat confirms that there was a report of a tragic loss at sea of an observer in June 2017. The Secretariat was actively involved in the communications related to the establishment and conduct of the search and rescue operations. From the observations of the Secretariat, the vessel, observer provider and flag CCM concerned did appear to meet the requirements set out in CMM 2016-03, and support was provided by relevant rescue authorities. Reports of the incident and associated investigations following the incident were provided to the Secretariat and the relevant parties involved, and the Secretariat has duly filed relevant correspondence in the WCPFC online compliance case file system. Unfortunately, the observer was not found.

**Summary**

47. The CMM booklet continues to be a popular tool for observers and it is noted that several managers are also using this booklet as a quick guide to most of the CMMS of the Commission. The future printings will continue; however, it may not be required in a couple of years due to the introduction of Electronic Reporting where electronic versions can be placed on the tablet used by the observer.

48. The ROP continues to develop, and the implementation of the WCPFC online compliance case file system, with support from SPC-OFP for ROP data access, is currently providing a mechanism for the Secretariat to draw on all available information related to implementation by CCMs of CMMs in its preparation of draft CMRs for consideration by TCC. The WCPFC online compliance case file system is also providing a tool that supports the implementation of the WCPFC12 agreed ROP pre-notification process for observer indicated "YES" in the observer trip monitoring summary.

49. The introduction of Electronic Reporting and Electronic Monitoring as a tool to assist managers and make data more quickly available will make for better and more accurate reporting in the future, however the standards and mechanisms that will be required to ensure the data fields and information being collected is collected by all observer programmes will need some work. Special training will be required by observers in the use of these ER reporting and the use of tablets.

**Recommendation**

50. TCC13 is invited to consider and note the information contained in the 9th Annual Report of the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme