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MCS Activities carried out by New Zealand

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Submitted by New Zealand



Image 1: Transshipment on the high seas

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) activities carried out by New Zealand in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Convention Area

1. Background

The New Zealand Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) lies at the southern extent of a number of tuna fisheries, including Yellowfin, Bigeye, Albacore, Skipjack and Southern Bluefin. Due to the migratory patterns exhibited by these tuna species, the adjacent high seas that surround the New Zealand EEZ is considered to be of high importance to New Zealand's domestic fisheries management.

As Members of the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) know, a number of legally binding Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) have been put in place on the high seas in the Convention Area in order to effectively manage the key tuna species mentioned above, as well as any fishing impacts on non-fish populations such as marine mammals and seabirds.

When the Commission adopts new or amended CMMs, the Members of WCPFC are then required to implement these CMMs through their own respective domestic processes so that their flagged vessels operate in accordance with these CMMs.

The Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) activities that New Zealand undertakes on the high seas is aimed at checking that fishing vessels operating specifically, in the southern longline fishery, are fishing in accordance with the legally binding CMMs that have been put in place by the Commission.

New Zealand also supports Pacific Island countries by assisting with MCS activities in the adjacent high seas to their respective EEZs.

Activities are also being carried out by our Quadrilateral Defence Coordination Group (QUADs) partners Australia, France (New Caledonia) and the United States of America who also expend considerable time and effort undertaking MCS on the high seas in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO).

This paper will summarise MCS activities that New Zealand has carried out in 2016-17, including the results of High Seas Boarding and Inspections (HSB&I). The information contained in this paper is intended to not only inform all other Members of these MCS activities in the spirit of transparency, but to also provide background information to support other related discussions that will take place during TCC 13.

2. Summary of the High Seas Boarding and Inspection activities that New Zealand has carried out during June to August 2017.

A total of 1 carrier and 15 longline vessels were inspected pursuant to CMM 2006-08 between 26/6/2017 – 4/08/2017, during all of the inspections, the vessel’s master and crew were cooperative and allowed our inspectors full access to records, fish and gear.

The majority (12) of high seas boarding and inspection activities occurred adjacent to the New Zealand Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the areas labelled Area 2 and Area 3 in the below map. A further 4 boarding and inspections occurred in the high seas pocket between the EEZs of Vanuatu and Fiji.

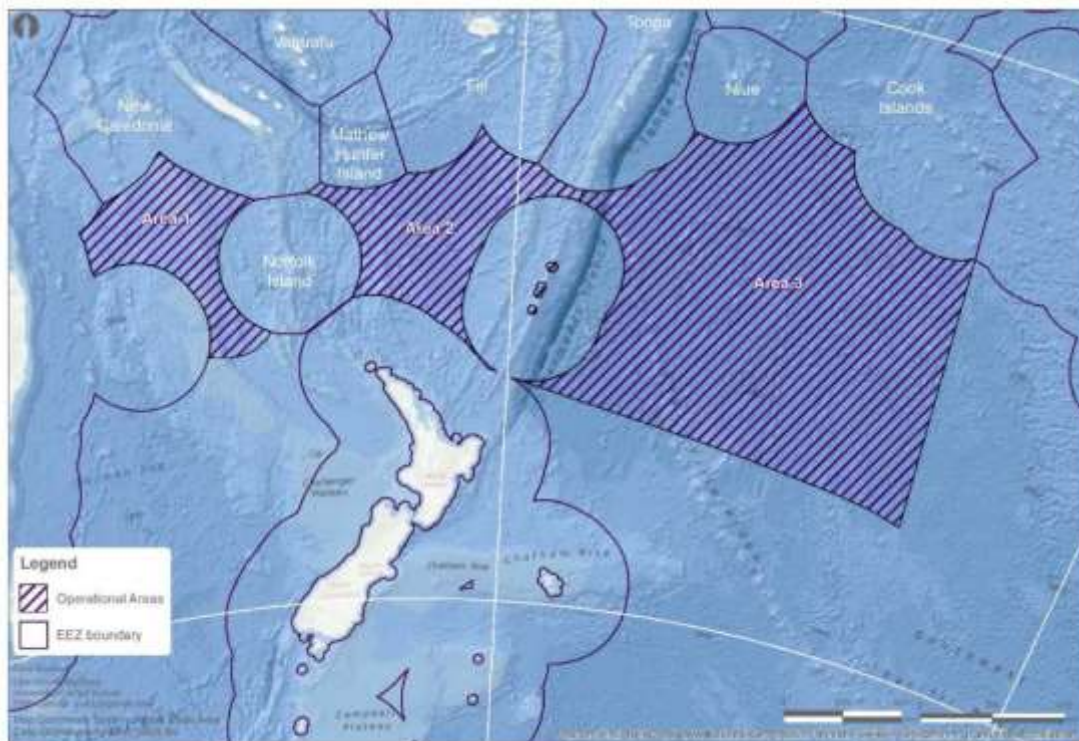


Image 2: Area of Operation for the New Zealand High Seas patrol

During each inspection, the vessels were inspected for compliance against relevant and applicable CMMs including,

CMM 2004-03	Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels
CMM 2008-03	Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles

CMM 2008-04	Prohibition on the use of Large Scale Driftnets
CMM 2009-06	CMM on the Regulation of Transshipment
CMM 2011-04	CMM for Oceanic Whitetip
CMM 2012-07	Mitigating Impacts of Fishing on Seabirds
CMM 2013-05	CMM for daily catch and effort reporting
CMM 2013-08	CMM for Silky Sharks
CMM 2013-10	WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels and Authorisation to Fish
CMM 2014-02	CMM for Commission VMS
CMM 2014-05	CMM for Sharks
CMM 2015-03	CMM for Seabirds

➤ **Inspection Results**

▪ **Serious non-reporting of catch (CMM 2013-05)**

One vessel is alleged to have misreported approximately 5 tonnes of Bigeye (BIG) tuna. The master initially stated that no BIG was retained at the direction of his company. This was due to the relevant flag state having an allowance on the amount that can be imported. The master also stated that he wasn't recording his catch and release of BIG, so no BIG was recorded on the SPC/FFA log sheets.

Inspection of holds located approximately 5 tonnes of BIG, including around 90 in a hold under bait boxes. A running record of the BIG catches was located in a separate notebook on the bridge. The master later stated that he was keeping the BIG separate for his own greed. This was considered to be a serious violation of the CMMs.



Image 3: Bigeye under bait boxes



Image 4: Bigeye located in one of the holds

- **Non-compliant vessel markings (CMM 2004-03)**

A number of vessels were not marked in accordance with CMM 2004-03, either the markings on the hull were less than the required 1m in height, or the marking on the deck was obscured by being covered by something.

- **Misreporting and non-reporting of catch, namely sharks (CMM 2013-05)**

A number of vessels inspected were consciously deciding to discard all sharks species caught (dead or alive). Many of the vessels were not recording any catches of shark at all on the SPC/FFA log sheets. One further vessel inspection located five shark fins in one of the holds, without any corresponding trunks, which the master had stated that they had been transhipped.



Image 5: Shark fins located with no corresponding trunks in freezer (left) and on deck (right)

- **Misreporting and non-reporting of catch, namely marlins (CMM 2013-05)**

A couple of vessels were recording marlin incorrectly, either by combining all marlin together as one species or recording black and blue marlin incorrectly.

On closer inspection of the SPC/FFA longline log sheet the embarked linguist pointed out that where it is recorded as Black Marlin in English the corresponding foreign language stipulates Blue.

Recommendation

The log sheet be translated again to determine if the correct marlin species have the correct mandarin translation.

- **Vessels not reporting on VMS (CMM 2014-04)**

It was identified during the New Zealand high seas boarding & inspection operation that a significant number of vessels reporting via Automatic Identification System (AIS) were not reporting via the WCPFC Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). It was analysed that up to 40% of vessels within the New Zealand Area of Operation (AO) were not reporting via the WCPFC VMS system.

In wanting to undertake our MCS requirements through the High Seas Boarding & Inspection procedures, having timely and accurate VMS data greatly enables operational planning and coordination. On inspection of vessels suspected of not reporting to VMS, the VMS units appeared to be on and functioning. Flag states responded by providing VMS track data for the vessels concerned.

Recommendation

New Zealand recommends that a review is undertaken based on the information that New Zealand has provided to the Secretariat to ascertain the cause of the issues.

Other - Language Issues

Language difficulties remain even though we have multi-language questionnaires. When used by inspectors to communicate with the master, the responses are not easily understood. An Officer from the Royal New Zealand Navy who could translate assisted with some of our inspections to facilitate communication. Further thought needs to be given to how the inspector can be helped in the situation that such translation services are not available.

Other - Rubbish Retention

On one occasion a vessel was noted discarding rubbish during setting operations. A bait box and plastic wrapping was observed being discarded into the Ocean. On the same vessel a number of loose plastic items were observed near a scupper.



Image 6: Bait box and plastic discarded during setting



Image 7: Rubbish on a deck in the vicinity of scupper

3. Summary of aerial surveillance to detect unlicensed fishing during Oct 2016 to September 2017

New Zealand undertakes a considerable amount of aerial surveillance on the high seas adjacent to the New Zealand EEZ and within the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). Prior to any patrol activity New Zealand requests WCPFC VMS data to assist with the operational planning. A significant issue with aerial surveillance planning is the detection of vessels not reporting to the WCPFC VMS. Due to the unreliability of Automatic Identification System (AIS) information, patrol time is consumed by confirming the identification of vessels only reporting via AIS. A number of non-reporting vessels were detected, with flag states confirming that the vessels are reporting via VMS.

- **Fishing vessels not authorised to fish on the RFV (CMM 2013-10)**

During a routine aerial surveillance patrol of the high seas in January 2017, fourteen fishing vessels were detected in the vicinity of the Louisville Ridge to the East of the New Zealand EEZ in the Pacific Ocean. Six of the vessels were not able to be correlated with the online WCPFC Registered Fishing Vessel (RFV) at the time of the patrol.

Investigations continue to determine if the vessels had authorisation to fish in the WCPO.



Image 8: One of Six vessels detected fishing in the WCPO that were not on the WCPFC RFV

Concluding remarks

WCPFC has adopted a number of CMMs over recent times which have been put in place to support effective fisheries management and protect the underlying marine ecosystem from the impacts of fishing. Adopting the CMMs at the Commission level is only part of the work that needs to be carried out in order to achieve the objectives of the Commission.

The implementation of the CMMs requires that Members not only enact domestic legislation in order to control their vessels through provisioned authorisations but also that their vessel's fishing activities are monitored by way of a number of different MCS tools.

It has been worrying to see further non-compliance, especially when the non-compliance is deliberate non-reporting of fish which will impact on future stock assessments.

MCS tools that will continue to help ensure compliance by fishing vessels include HSB&I, observers, VMS, port inspections, aerial surveillance and data analysis. Further introduction and development of CMMs based on what is observed at sea, or from the air will hopefully further sustain the fish stocks from becoming over fished.