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

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LIBERIA

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WESTERN CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES
COMMISSION (WCPFC)**

**PART I: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND
STATISTICS**

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

**27 June 2018
(Revised 10 September 2018)**

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|---|--|
| Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by 30 April 2017. | There is no scientific data to report. |
| Liberian flagged vessels are engaged in transshipment activities <u>only</u> in the WCPFC Convention Area. | |

1. Abstract/Summary

The Republic of Liberia is situated within the east central Atlantic region of the Gulf of Guinea. With an Atlantic coastline of approximately 570km and a continental shelf averaging 34km in width, the marine fishing grounds of Liberia cover 186 322.2km² within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).¹ In 2017, Liberia's Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) was reduced from six to three nautical miles by Executive Order No. 84, and is reserved for artisanal and semi-industrial fishing activities.² The fishing area extends from the shrimp-rich Shebro grounds bordering Sierra Leone in the west, to the Cavalla River Basin bordering Côte d'Ivoire in the east, and the tuna pelagic fishing grounds extending out into the Atlantic Ocean.

Liberia's continental shelf area has considerable marine fish species. The main oceanic pelagic resources are tuna and tuna-like species such as yellowfin tuna, bonito and marlin. Demersal fish species are also found in marine waters and are harvested on a commercial basis.³ Crustaceans such as shrimp, crab and lobster are less abundant, but are of much higher value than finfish species, and are targeted for Liberia's export market.⁴

Liberia's fisheries sector contributes approximately 10% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Revenue to the Government from licensing fees, vessel registration fees, inspection and observer fees, import/export charges, and fines totaled approximately \$400,000 in 2011 and increased precipitously to nearly \$6 million by mid-2013, due to penalties collected from the prosecutions of foreign vessels illegally fishing in domestic waters.⁵

Liberia's fisheries has three (3) main subcomponents:

1. Marine: comprises of industrial and artisanal activities;

¹ FAO Fishery Country Profile (Republic of Liberia): <http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/FCP/en/LBR/profile.htm>

² Executive Order No. 84 Pertaining to the Management of Liberia's Fishery Resources (Apr. 22, 2017): <http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/scan00.pdf>

³ Liberia Fisheries, Bureau of National Fisheries - Marine Division: www.liberiafisheries.net/aboutus/marine

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy: Republic of Liberia (2014).

2. Inland fisheries: mainly artisanal; and
3. Aquaculture: through subsistence fish farming.

Artisanal fisheries are a key sector in Liberia, providing food and livelihood to coastal communities. There are roughly 3,300 canoes and more than 11,000 fishers operating actively from 114 fish landing sites along the coastline. The artisanal fleet comprises the indigenous Kru canoe, operated by Kru fishermen using paddles or sail.⁶ The marine industrial fishery is divided into a trawl fishery for shrimp and demersal finfish, which provides frozen whole fish, and shrimp for the local market and an offshore large pelagic fishery. The inland fisheries are based on rivers, lakes and wetlands such as swamps and coastal lagoons. The aquaculture sub-sector, which includes mariculture, is underdeveloped and largely subsistence, with about 300 fish farmers engaged in some form of fish culture generally on a part-time basis. About 1,704 ponds (113.9 hectares) of various sizes are distributed in about 160 rural communities of which 1,125 (73.3 hectares) are in use for farming tilapia and catfish.⁷

The office responsible for fishing is the National Fisheries & Aquaculture Authority (NAFAA), formerly the Bureau of National Fisheries. Major functions of NAFAA include: registration of artisanal fishing canoes, inspection of fishing canoes and fishing gears, granting of fishing licenses, record of catch data, and deployment of fisheries enumerators at landing sites. In 2010, the new Fisheries Regulations were enacted to ensure that the sectors are well managed and regulated. Liberia's fisheries sector received a major boost in 2017 with the commissioning of the Mesurado Industries Fisheries Terminal, which is equipped with a monitoring system to manage the country's agreements with the European Union licensed fishing vessels in Liberia's territorial waters.⁸ The Fisheries Terminal or Fish Monitoring Center (FMC) works closely in collaboration with the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA) and the Liberian Registry to monitor reefer vessels transshipping in regional fishing areas to effectively combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.

Executive Order No. 84 (April 2017) granted complete supervisory and fiscal authority over BNF (now NAFAA) to LMA, pending enactment of the National Fisheries Act. LMA was established in 1948 with launch of its Registry during the post-World War II period.⁹ It is an autonomous agency, which has the responsibility of administering the Liberian Maritime Program. In order to effectively operate Liberia's maritime program overseas, LMA contracted the services of wholly U.S. owned and operated Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR, LLC or Liberian Registry), as its agent to aid the Government in the operation of the maritime operations. The Registry is the second largest in the world, with approximately 4,170 vessels, aggregating more than 150 million gross tons, which represents 12% of the world's ocean going fleet¹⁰ and provides the day-to-day management for Liberia's ship and corporate registry under the provisions of Liberia Maritime Law and Regulations. Liberia Maritime Law and Regulations include requirements for vessel registration, crew licensing, certification of vessels for safety,

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ New Fishing Site, Terminal in Liberia Brings Better Fish and More Jobs:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/06/08/new-fishing-site-terminal-in-liberia-brings-better-fish-and-more-jobs>

⁹ The Liberia Maritime Authority: <http://maritimeliberia.com/?about/history.html>

¹⁰ The Liberian Registry: <http://www.liscr.com/about-liberian-registry>

marine investigation and inspection, and promulgated by the office of the Commissioner of the LMA.

The Liberian Registry does not register fishing vessels. However, it does register container ships, bulk and non-bulk carriers, chemical/oil tankers, refrigerated cargo vessels, reefers, mobile offshore drilling units, etc.

2. Tabular Annual (2017) Fisheries Information

Of the twenty-six (26) vessels authorized to operate in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2017, only four (4) actively engaged in transshipment operations during the January-December period.

Transshipments by Liberian flagged vessels in 2017:

Annex II (1)

| Species | Total Quantity Transshipped (KG) | WCP-CA High Seas | IATTC-WCP-CA Overlap High Seas | IATTC High Seas | Kiribati EEZ | Tuvalu EEZ | Prod. Form | Gear |
|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------|----------|
| BET | 7,856,870 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| YFT | 1,505,560 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| SWO | 1,021,505 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| MLS | 75,924 | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Frozen | Longline |
| BUM | 34,308 | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| BLM | 1,483 | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| ALB | 1,429,464 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| SKJ | 1,338 | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| OTH | 246,230 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Frozen | Longline |
| TOTAL | 12,172,682 | 6,174,094 | 1,579,314 | 2,885,367 | 1,427,758 | 106,149 | | |

Annex (II) (2)

Number of Transshipments by Liberian Flagged Vessels

| Total No. of Transshipments | WCP-CA (High Seas) | Tuvalu (High Seas) | IATTC-WCP-CA Overlap (High Seas) | IATTC (High Seas) | Kiribati EEZ |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 248 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

3. Background

Liberia is a Cooperating Non-member (CNM) of the WCPFC and there are presently twenty-six (26) Liberian flagged vessels registered on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels.

4. Socio-economic Factors

Fisheries play a vital role in the livelihood of the coastal population. It is moreover an essential sector in the agricultural framework of Liberia as, well as in the national economy. In recent years, fisheries have contributed approximately 10% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the sector provides full or part time employment for about 37,000 people.¹¹

With the reduction of Liberia's IEZ from six to three nautical miles (*see* Executive Order No. 84), industrial and semi-industrial fishing is expected to be revitalized, thereby increasing fisheries contribution to the national economy.

5. Disposal of Catch

Liberian flagged vessels are not catch or donor vessels; they are receiving vessels.

6. Onshore Developments

On December 9, 2015, Liberia and the European Union (EU) signed a 5-year Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) and associated protocol, which set out fishing opportunities for EU vessels in Liberian territorial waters. The SFPA further expands the EU's network of tuna fisheries agreements in West Africa. The related protocol offers opportunities to 28 purse seiners and 6 surface longline vessels to fish for tuna and tuna-like species in waters under Liberia's jurisdiction, based on a reference tonnage of 6,500 tons. In return, the EU will pay Liberia an average annual compensation of 650,000 Euros, out of which 50% is earmarked to support the fisheries policy of Liberia, including but not limited to reinforcing its fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance capacity.¹²

Currently, Liberia is collaborating with Sierra Leone to implement a sub-project created by the EAF-Nansen project to develop a sector specific management plan for the artisanal fisheries of the two countries.¹³ The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) system covers issues related to target species, non-target species, other dependent species within the ecosystem, minimizing waste and pollution, endangered species biodiversity, optimum utilization, the welfare of various states involved including the interests of artisanal and subsistence fishers.

The EAF-Nansen Project is a partnership between the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD), the Norwegian Institute for Marine Research (IMR) and the Food and Agriculture

¹¹ World Food Program, *The State of Food and Nutrition Insecurity in Liberia* (2010). Available at: <http://home.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp231357.pdf>.

¹² Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Liberia (Dec. 12, 2015): [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212(01)&from=EN)

¹³ *See* The Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries at <https://www.liberiafisheries.net/programs/EAF>

Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Through a tripartite agreement, these organizations are supporting Liberia and other developing countries in their efforts to fulfil their commitments and implement an ecosystems approach to fisheries.¹⁴

7. Future Prospect of Fishery

The future of Liberia's fishery looks promising. The Government and people of Liberia look forward to a sustainable managed fisheries sector, capable of:

- providing increased profitable fisheries employment opportunities while offering an enabling environment for upgrading technical skills for enhanced value added fisheries vocations;
- engaging participatory fisheries management institutions based on community and stakeholder structures for the creation of opportunities for socio-economic development;
- contributing to GDP, national food and nutritional security and improving living conditions, by upgrading and adopting appropriate, modern and efficient fisheries capabilities for increased fish production while reducing losses through illegal fishing; and
- deriving net benefits from a vibrant fish trade supported by, value addition systems and fisheries infrastructure for fish landing and export, as well as efficient fishing input supply and distribution systems.¹⁵

8. Status of Tuna Fishery Data Collection Systems

Liberian flagged vessels operating in the WCPFC Area and foreign vessels operating in Liberian waters are required to install satellite-based vessel monitoring systems (VMS), which are capable of providing static unique identifier; real time geographical position of the vessel; and date and time. Moreover, Liberian flagged vessels operating in the WCPFC Area are equipped with VMS tablets, which can transmit transshipment data, email and are tamper resistant. The vessels are required to submit transshipment declarations to the WCPFC and the FMC upon completion of transshipment activities within a specified period.

9. Research Activities Covering Target and Non-Target Species

Liberia has not conducted any research activities covering target and non-target species.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy: Republic of Liberia (2014).