



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
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Potential Revisions to
WCPFC Regional Observer Programme Minimum Standard Data Fields

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Paper by the United States of America

¹This revision replaces the original issued on 12 September 2018

**Potential Revisions to the
WCPFC Regional Observer Programme Minimum Standard Data Fields**

**Discussion Paper Prepared by the United States of America
for the
Fourteenth Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee**

In 2016, the WCPFC convened two workshops, funded by the ABNJ (Common Oceans) Tuna project, to analyze the effectiveness of sea turtle mitigation in Pacific longline fisheries with respect to rates of interaction and mortality. The second workshop¹ included recommendations on data collection by fishery observers. The participants of the workshop agreed that one of the best approaches to obtaining high quality data for similar analyses in the future is to ensure that data collection protocols for turtle interactions with fisheries, and those describing the associated fishing effort, are standardized. The workshop final report recommended specific updates to the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (ROP) Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDF).

Recognizing the need for improved data collection on sea turtle interactions, WCPFC14 tasked SC14 with considering the workshop-recommended updates to the ROP MSDF, and recommending any modifications for consideration by the ROP coordinator, TCC14, and WCPFC15. While SC14 was unable to agree on specific recommendations, significant progress was made towards development of modifications to the ROP MSDF. The modifications considered by SC14 would serve to link individual catch events to gear information at a finer scale than is currently being collected, would generally improve data collection on sea turtle interactions (as well as interactions with other species of special interest), and would serve to address gaps that are currently precluding the Commission's ability to properly assess the effects of mitigation measures for sea turtles.

Due to the largely technical nature of the ROP MSDF modifications discussed at SC14 (e.g. collecting information at hook vs. trip level) the United States expressed its intention at SC14 to forward the changes considered by the SC to TCC for further review. The United States suggests TCC14 review the potential modifications as they were left by SC14 (attached) and provide recommendations to WCPFC15.

¹ See workshop final report presented at SC13: <https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/EB-WP-10%20Sea%20Turtle%20Mitigation.pdf>

SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST Marine Reptiles Turtles, Marine Mammals, Sea-Birds Seabirds, Designated certain Shark Species ¹		For information only; not for inclusion in the ROP MSDF
GENERAL INFORMATION		Already Collected?
Type of interaction	Indicate what type of interaction, i.e. caught on line - tangled in net, swimming around outside of net, etc., <u>using the species interaction codes (G01-G06) and new codes for 'entangled in purse seine net (G07)' and 'entangled in FAD (G08)'. If purse seine, indicate if entangled in FAD, etc.</u>	Yes No additional work (only new codes)
Date and time of interaction	Record ships ship's date and time of interaction	Yes (text change only)
Latitude and longitude of	Record <u>geographic</u> position of the interaction.	Yes (text change only)
Species code of marine reptile turtle, marine mammal, or seabird.	Use FAO codes for Species.	Yes (text change only)
LANDED ON DECK		
Length	Measure length in Centimetres centimetres.	Yes (text change only)
Length measurement code	Measure using the measur <u>ing</u> e method determined for that species.	Yes (text change only)
Gender Sex	<u>Determine the sex and record using codes 'male', 'female', 'indeterminate' or 'unknown'</u> Sex the animal if possible.	Yes No additional work (only new codes)
Estimated shark fin weight by species	Weigh each species species' shark fins separately if shark has been fin finned by crew, if no scales estimate the weight.	Yes (text change only)
Estimated shark carcass weight by species	Weigh each carcass of a finned shark, if no scales available or body is discarded, or if it is too large to handle; estimate the weight.	Yes (no change)

^{1 1} SC13 agreed that shark species of special interest include silky shark, oceanic whitetip shark, whale shark and all species of mantas and mobulid (devil rays) (SC13 Summary Report, para. 134). WCPFC14 adopted the SC's recommendation.

		Already collected?
Condition when landed on Deck	<u>Record What is the condition of the animals when caught using “Species Caught and Released Condition Codes” (A0-A3, D and U).</u>	Yes (text change only)
Condition when released	<u>Record What is the condition of the animal when discarded using “Species Caught and Release Condition Codes” (A0-A3, D, and U).</u>	Yes (text change only)
Tag recovery information	Record as much as information as possible on any T tags recovered.	Yes (no change)
Tag release information	Record as much as information as possible on any T tags placed on the species animal before being released.	Yes (no change)
<u>Hook, Bait and Material</u>	<u>For each SSI caught record the type of hook and hook size using the SPC “Terminal Gear Identification Guide” , the branch line material, and the bait (if known) that the animal was caught on</u>	Yes, but collected at the trip or set level, not at the hook level. (Hook type and size and bait type are collected at the set level. Branchline material is collected at the trip level.) Information is required at the hook level because often several types (or “mixed”) are recorded at the trip or set level and this severely limits analysis. <u>To reduce observer workload this extra information could be required for sea turtles only.</u>
<u>Gear remaining when released</u>	<u>If the animal is released alive describe whether gear is left attached (yes/no). If yes, describe the length of trailing line, and/or any other material left attached.</u>	Partially. Whether the hook and/or line is removed is now required, but the type and length of gear left attached is not. <u>To reduce observer workload this extra information could be required for sea turtles only.</u>
INTERACTION WITH VESSEL OR GEAR ONLY		
Vessel’s activity during interaction	What was the vessel doing when the interaction took place i.e. setting, hauling,	Yes
Condition observed at start of interaction	Condition of species animal at the start of the interaction <u>(use codes A0-A3, D or U).</u>	Yes

Condition observed at end of interaction	Condition of <u>species animal</u> at the end of the interaction <u>(use codes A0-A3, D or U).</u>	Yes
Description of interaction	Indicate interaction, with the vessel gear only - caught on line - tangled in net, etc.	Yes
Number of animals sighted	How many animals sighted during interaction.	Yes