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Annual Report on the Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area (EHSP-SMA)

WCPFC-TCC22-2026-RP06

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Submitted by the Secretariat

Purpose

1. This paper reports on the implementation of, and compliance with CMM 2016-02 for the Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area (EHSP-SMA).
2. The EHSP-SMA is the area of high seas bounded by the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the Cook Islands to the west, French Polynesia to the east, and Kiribati to the north¹.
3. The report summarises information on vessel sightings, Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) reporting, vessel presence, fishing activity and catch, transshipment reporting, MCS and inspection activities, and CMS outcomes for the EHSP-SMA.
4. The catch analysis is based on the most recent catch data available to the Secretariat at the time this report was prepared, currently to the end of 2024. VMS, entry and exit alert information, vessel sighting reports, transshipment reporting, and MCS information are reported for 2025 where available. Note that this report was prepared to meet an earlier reporting deadline, so some 2025 data is preliminary or unavailable at time of writing.

Key messages

- a. VMS-detected vessel activity in the EHSP-SMA remains limited with longliners making up 96% of the 134 monthly VMS vessel records, and 130 of those vessels flagged to China and Chinese Taipei.
- b. Vessel presence was lower in 2025 than in 2024 (based on the monthly VMS vessel counts in Table 1 with the total number of monthly vessel records declining by around 18%; from 164 in 2024 to 134 in 2025 (may include transiting vessels).
- c. No vessel sighting reports, transshipment reports, or alleged infringements were reported in 2025. This is consistent with previous annual reporting since CMM 2016-02 came into effect; however, this is not mandatory reporting and so this result should be treated with caution. CMM 2016-02 also prohibits all transshipment activities in the EHSP-SMA from 1 January 2019. When this obligation was assessed under the CMS in 2020 and 2024, no compliance issues were identified for applicable CCMs. Further work is needed to

¹ As defined in paragraph 1 of CMM 2016-02

assess the effectiveness of observer deployment and reporting of transshipment monitoring of receiving vessels.

- d. TCC may wish to recommend that the Commission review CMM 2016-02 in 2027, noting that although the measure calls for a review every two years, in conjunction with relevant advice from TCC, no review has been undertaken since it came into effect in 2017. Such a review could draw on the annual report series and available VMS, catch, vessel sighting, transshipment, MCS, and CMS information.

Introduction

5. The management and reporting arrangements for the EHSP-SMA are set out in [CMM 2016-02](#) Conservation and Management Measure for the Eastern High Seas Pocket Special Management Area.
6. Vessels in the EHSP-SMA reporting to the VMS are displayed as a “live list²” on the secure [Special Management Areas](#) page on the WCPFC website (refer to Figure 1). Information on vessels shown in the live list are sourced directly from the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV).

² In accord with CMM 2016-02 paragraph 5



Figure 1: A sample screen shot of the “live list” on the WCPFC website.

Review of available data

Vessel sightings

7. Paragraph 2 of CMM 2016-02 encourages CCMs³ to ensure that their flagged vessels operating in the EHSP-SMA report sightings of any fishing vessel to the Commission Secretariat within six hours of the sighting event, whether or not the vessel sighted is on the RFV.
8. During 2025, the Secretariat did not receive any vessel sighting reports for the EHSP-SMA. This is consistent with previous EHSP-SMA annual reporting since CMM 2016-02 came into effect, which has not recorded any vessel sighting reports submitted under paragraph 2. The absence of sighting reports does not reflect actual activity as this is not a mandatory obligation and periodic reviews of the Commission VMS shows multiple vessels active in the EHSP (transiting and/or with tracks consistent with fishing activity) that are likely to have resulted in sightings that were not reported.

Vessels and VMS reporting

9. Table 1 and Table 2 show the number of vessels by gear type and flag respectively, that reported VMS positions in the EHSP-SMA for each month from 2021 to 2025. Table 3 summarises entry and exit reporting by vessel flag and type.
10. The tables indicate that activity in the EHSP-SMA is by longline vessels, mainly flagged to China and Chinese Taipei. From 2021 to 2023, VMS-detected vessel presence was generally concentrated in the middle months of the year, particularly February to October. During 2024 and 2025, the seasonal pattern appears less

³ To assist with internal record keeping at the WCPFC Secretariat, copies of vessel sighting reports required in accordance with CMM 2016-02 paragraph 2 are to be submitted the Commission and can be sent to the Secretariat by: wcpfc@wcpfc.int.

concentrated, with activity more spread across the years with relatively high vessel presence also recorded in January, November, and December.

11. During 2021 and 2022, the number of unique vessels reporting to the VMS was 58% and 60% respectively, of the average of 2019 and 2020 numbers. This is likely due to changes in operational activity arising from COVID-19. Numbers rose by around 60% in 2023 while 2024 showed a 44% decrease in the number of vessels compared to the 2019/2020 average. In 2025, the number of vessels operating in the EHSP-SMA has declined by 18% compared with 2024.
12. Table AI - 1 and Table AII - 1 summarise the numbers of entry and exit alerts generated through the Commission VMS for 2022-2025 and the detailed list for 2025 respectively. The reliability of entry and exit reporting generated by the Commission VMS has remained high following improvements since 2020.
13. More detail on the vessels operating in or transiting the EHSP-SMA is available in Annex 1, which lists 72 vessels reporting to the WCPFC VMS from the EHSP-SMA during 2025.

Table 1: Number of vessels by vessel type, year and month in EHSP-SMA (Source: WCPFC VMS data).

Vessel type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2021												
Bunker	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
Fish carrier	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longliner	3	16	15	9	17	17	9	6	10	5	2	1
Purse seiner	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	8	16	15	10	18	18	11	6	11	5	2	2
2022												
Bunker	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Longliner	0	5	10	7	11	11	16	21	14	2	2	1
Purse seiner	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Total	2	6	10	8	12	11	16	23	14	2	3	2
2023												
Bunker	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fish carrier	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Longliner	1	3	30	29	46	45	41	37	22	14	4	5
Purse seiner	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Total	2	4	31	30	46	47	42	37	22	15	7	8
2024												
Bunker	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Fish carrier	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Longliner	10	16	16	22	17	8	11	4	3	9	15	18
Purse seiner	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13	16	17	25	18	9	12	4	4	10	16	20
2025												
Bunker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fish carrier	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Longliner	14	17	11	9	2	8	14	5	7	12	17	13
Purse seiner	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	14	17	11	9	3	8	14	6	7	12	18	15

Table 2: Number of vessels by CCM, year and month in EHSP-SMA (Source: WCPFC VMS data).

Flag CCM	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2021												
Cook Islands	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
China	3	8	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
EU-Netherlands	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Panama	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese Taipei	0	8	15	9	14	14	8	5	10	5	2	1
United States of America	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	8	16	15	10	18	18	11	6	11	5	2	2
2022												
Cook Islands	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
China	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
EU-Spain	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese Taipei	0	5	9	7	7	10	14	12	13	2	0	1
United States of America	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Vanuatu	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	2	0
Total	2	6	10	8	12	11	16	23	14	2	3	2
2023												
Cook Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
China	1	2	8	7	8	19	9	8	11	2	2	2
EU-Spain	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Korea (Republic of)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Panama	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese Taipei	1	1	23	22	38	26	32	28	11	12	3	3
United States of America	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Vanuatu	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	2	4	31	30	46	47	42	37	22	15	7	8
2024												
Cook Islands	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
China	0	7	10	14	9	4	5	1	0	4	7	6
Panama	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Chinese Taipei	10	9	6	8	8	4	7	3	3	6	9	12

United States of America	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13	16	17	25	18	9	12	4	4	10	16	20
2025												
China	6	8	7	3	1	5	2	1	2	6	4	10
Fiji	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Panama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
El Salvador	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chinese Taipei	8	9	4	6	2	3	12	5	5	6	14	1
Total	14	17	11	9	3	8	14	6	7	12	18	15

Table 3: Number of vessels by flag CMM and vessel type for 2025 in EHSP-SMA (Source: WCPFC VMS data).

CCM	Vessel type	Number of vessels on VMS	Reported entry alerts	Reported exit alerts
China	Fish carrier	3	3	3
	Longliner	32	42	42
Fiji	Longliner	2	2	2
Panama	Bunker	1	1	1
El Salvador	Purse seiner	1	1	1
Chinese Taipei	Longliner	33	58	58

Fishing activity and catch

14. Note this report is being released early to meet a request by the Commission in 2025, which means that the data compilation occurred prior to the WCPFC catch data submission date of 30 April 2026. While fishing activity and catch cannot be updated from the previous report at this stage, vessel operational activity including reconciled VMS reporting for 2025 is available. Where significant data changes are available after the release of this report, an updated version will be issued prior to TCC22 or will be available through the report prepared in 2027.

Transshipment

15. CMM 2016-02 prohibited all transshipment activities in the EHSP-SMA from 1 January 2019. The Secretariat received no reports of transshipment activity in the EHSP-SMA during 2025.
16. The Secretariat's prototype analytical tool to assess potential transshipments by identifying vessels with VMS positions in proximity for 8 hours or more is now being trialled with CCMs alongside quarterly transshipment reconciliations. It replaces an early tool developed within the VMS Reporting Status Tool (VRST).
17. As of 1 April 2023, observers have been required to provide reports of transshipment activities involving vessels on which they are deployed, in accordance with paragraph 13 of [CMM 2009-06](#). For most vessels likely to be operating in the EHSP-SMA, paragraph 13 c) would apply, meaning observers must be deployed on the receiving vessel. For this reason, reviews of VMS data and observer reporting would assist to determine any potential transshipments. At this time, observer reporting of transshipments does not reliably identify where a

vessel has been deployed to a receiving vessel to ensure the required monitoring of all transshipments. Further work is required to assess the effectiveness of implementation of observer reporting of transshipments.

Summary of Members MCS and Inspection Activities

18. In 2025, the Secretariat did not receive any reports of potential infringements by vessels operating in the EHSP-SMA from monitoring, control, and surveillance activities such as high seas boarding and inspections or aerial surveillance activities.
19. The outcomes of four historical cases for CMM 2010-02 02 (VMS entry and exit reporting) are shown in Figure 6. No cases have been reported under the replacement CMM 2016-02.

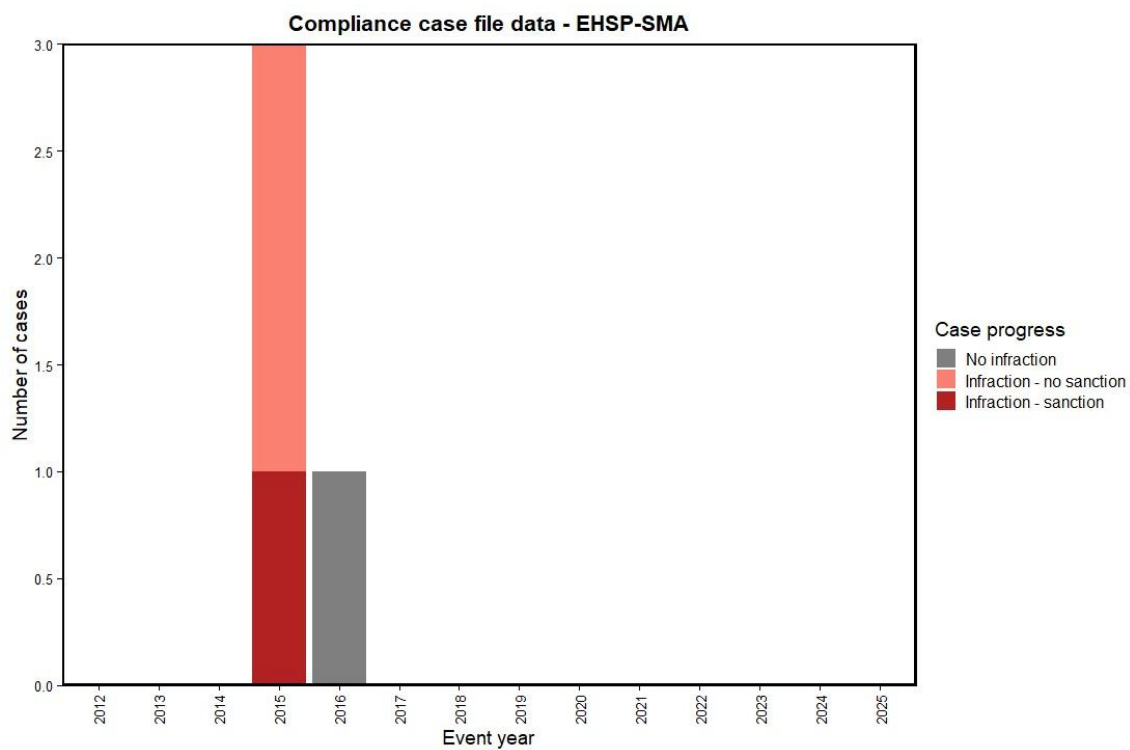


Figure 6: The outcomes of four compliance cases under CMM 2010-02 02 and from 2017 onwards, CMM 2016-02 02.

Annual reporting

20. There are three (3) potential obligations in CMM 2016-02 for potential reporting/monitoring:
 - a. Paragraph 02 - Vessels in the EHSP may report sightings of any other fishing vessel to the Secretariat. This is a non-mandatory obligation; therefore, CCMs assessed it as “no audit point required”. As such, compliance with this obligation is no longer reviewed through annual reporting;
 - b. Paragraph 04 - Flag CCMs to monitor vessels in EHSP, using at minimum WCPFC VMS to ensure compliance with this measure which is mandatory, however CCMs assessed “no audit point required”, so compliance with this obligation is no longer reviewed through annual reporting;
 - c. Paragraph 06 - Transshipment is prohibited in EHSP from 1 Jan 2019, this is mandatory and an audit point was adopted.
21. Each year CCMs report on CMM 2016-02 06 in their Annual Report Part 2. (ARPt2).

CMS Outcomes 2013 - 2025

22. Figure 7 provides the results of CMS evaluations of EHSP-SMA requirements under CMM 2010-02 and CMM 2016-02. CMM 2010-02 was evaluated annually between 2013 (for Reporting Year 2012) and 2016 (for Reporting Year 2015). The replacement measure CMM 2016-02 was evaluated in 2021 (for reporting year 2020) and 2025 (for reporting year 2024) and will be reviewed and is to be evaluated again in 2026 (for reporting year 2025).
23. Figure 7 shows that between 2013-2016 there were ongoing implementation issues with the required entry and exit manual reporting. CMM 2016-02 removed the need for manual entry and exit reporting from 2017. Instead, alerts are automatically generated by the Commission VMS.
24. CMM 2016-02 paragraph 6 prohibits all transshipment activities in the EHSP-SMA from 1 January 2019. In the 2020 CMS assessment, applicable CCMs were assessed as having implemented this prohibition through legally binding national instruments. The obligation was assessed again in 2025, covering Reporting Year 2024, and no compliance issues were identified for applicable CCMs.

Review of CMM 2016-02

25. Paragraph 9 of CMM 2016-02 provides that the measure shall be reviewed every two years, in conjunction with relevant advice from TCC. The review is to consider, among other things, whether the measure is having its intended effect and the extent to which all CCMs and fishing sectors are contributing to achieving the Commission's conservation objectives. Since CMM 2016-02 came into effect in 2017, the Secretariat has continued to provide annual reports to TCC in accordance with paragraph 8. However, no dedicated review of CMM 2016-02 has been undertaken under paragraph 9.
26. TCC may wish to consider whether to recommend that the Commission schedule a review of the measure, drawing on the annual report series and available VMS, catch, vessel sighting, transshipment, MCS, and CMS information.

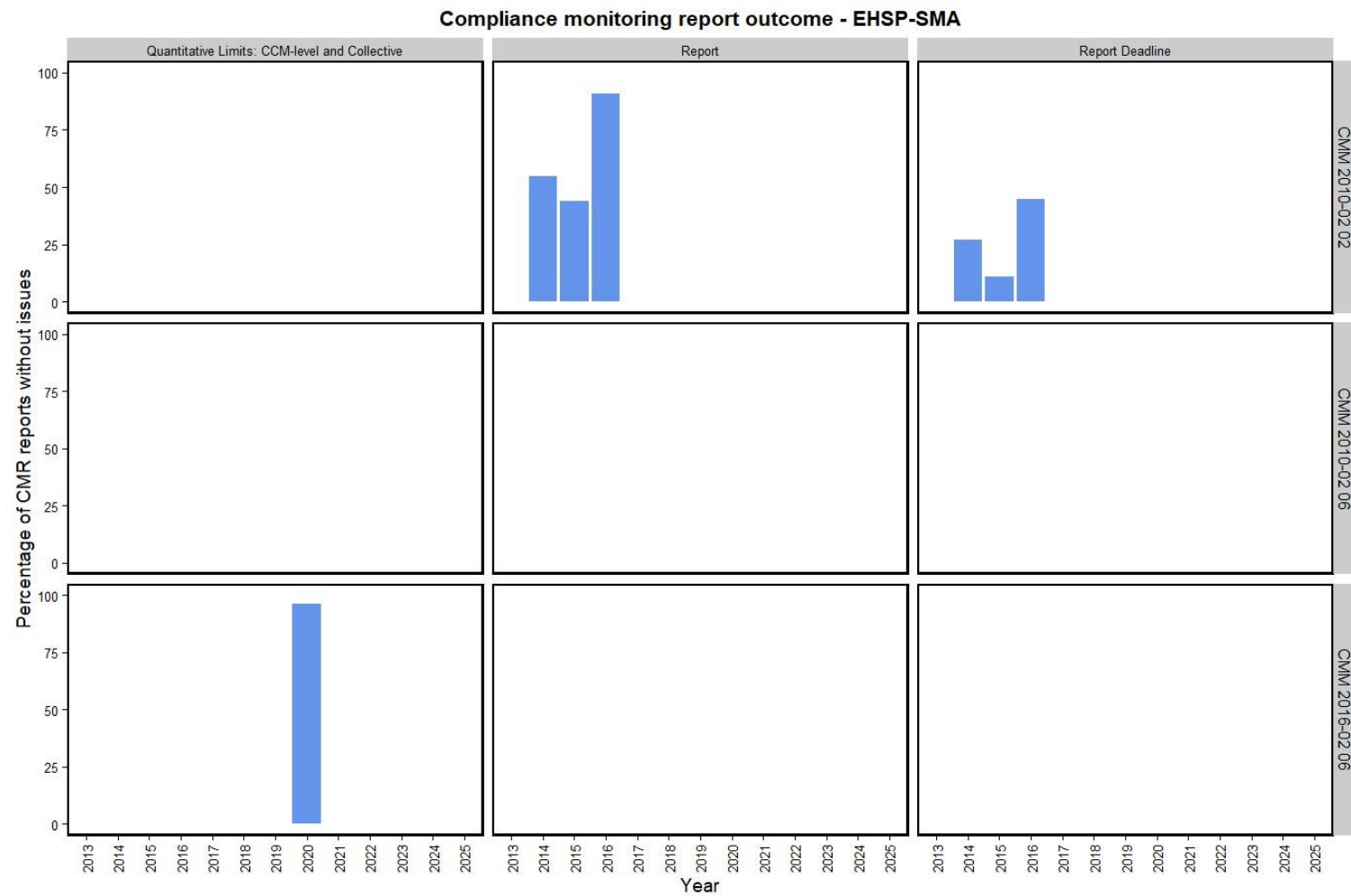


Figure 7: CMR Compliance Score relating to eastern high seas pocket related requirements over the years it was assessed.

Annex I

Table AI - 1: Summary of entry and exit alerts within the EHSP-SMA generated by the Commission VMS by flag for 2022 to 2025 (includes transiting vessels).

Year	CMM	Vessel type	Vessels on VMS	Reported entry alerts	Reported exit alerts
2022	Cook Islands	Bunker	2	2	2
		Purse seiner	1	3	3
	China	Longliner	12	12	12
	EU-Spain	Purse seiner	2	2	2
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	38	58	58
	United States of America	Purse seiner	2	2	2
	Vanuatu	Longliner	3	7	7
2023	Cook Islands	Purse seiner	1	1	1
	China	Fish carrier	2	3	3
		Longliner	34	54	54
	EU-Spain	Purse seiner	1	1	1
	Korea (Republic of)	Bunker	1	1	1
		Fish carrier	1	1	1
	Panama	Bunker	1	1	1
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	50	133	133
	United States of America	Purse seiner	4	5	5
	Vanuatu	Bunker	1	1	1
		Longliner	1	1	1
2024	Cook Islands	Bunker	1	1	1
	China	Fish carrier	2	3	3
		Longliner	45	61	61
	Panama	Bunker	3	5	5
		Fish carrier	1	1	1
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	35	69	69
	United States of America	Purse seiner	4	5	5
	China	Fish carrier	3	3	3
		Longliner	32	42	42

2025	Fiji	Longliner	2	2	2
	Panama	Bunker	1	1	1
	El Salvador	Purse seiner	1	1	1
	Chinese Taipei	Longliner	33	58	58

Annex II

Table AII - 1: List of all vessels within the EHSP-SMA reporting to WCPFC VMS in 2025 (includes transiting vessels).

Flag CCM	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
China	11637	PINGTAIRONGLENG2	BZW9K	Fish carrier
	11612	PINGTAIRONGLENG1	BZW8K	Fish carrier
	12154	PINGTAIRONGLENG6	BZW6K	Fish carrier
	11395	ZHONGYANG22	BZW1B	Longliner
	10696	HONG YANG 11	BZU4B	Longliner
	12187	GUANGYUANYU332	BZXH6	Longliner
	12186	GUANGYUANYU331	BZXH5	Longliner
	12188	GUANGYUANYU333	BZWZ32	Longliner
	12189	GUANGYUANYU335	BZWH45	Longliner
	10703	PINGTAIRONG318	BZW9O	Longliner
	11782	GUANG YUAN YU 336	BZXF8	Longliner
	10032	HAI XING 716	BZ8VG	Longliner
	10034	HAI XING 718	BZ1VH	Longliner
	9924	PINGTAIRONG31	BZ7VE	Longliner
	9922	PINGTAIRONG9	BZ8VD	Longliner
	9923	PINGTAIRONG13	BZ9VD	Longliner
	9925	PINGTAIRONG39	BZ8VE	Longliner
	10718	DONGYU1530	BZU3B	Longliner
	11156	GUANG YUAN YU 339	BZWH48	Longliner
	11890	RONGHENG87	BZU1R	Longliner
	11891	RONGHENG13	BZU5Q	Longliner
	12348	ZHONGSHUI947	BZZA4	Longliner
	124	PINGTAIRONG301	BZW2P	Longliner
	10550	PINGTAIRONG71	BZ2VV	Longliner
	12347	ZHONGSHUI937	BZZA3	Longliner
	10821	RONGYE153	BZ3VW	Longliner

10822	RONGYE159	BZ4VW	Longliner
11484	SHUNDA8	BZTM7	Longliner
11485	SHUNDA9	BZTM8	Longliner
9795	SUNSTAR 7	BZTY2	Longliner
9794	SUNSTAR 6	BZTH9	Longliner
150	XIN SHI JI 78	BZVZ8	Longliner
136	XIN SHI JI 37	BZUY8	Longliner
11155	GUANG YUAN YU 338	BZWY47	Longliner
11997	SUIYUANYU39	BZWA25	Longliner
11752	SUIYUANYU36	BZXE9	Longliner
11026	SUIYUANYU31	BZWA33	Longliner

Continued...

Flag CCM	ID	Vessel name	Call sign	Vessel type
Fiji	10175	RISING NO. 28	3DQI	Longliner
	10176	RISING NO. 16	3DQC	Longliner
Panama	12421	HUI HANG 828	3E8278	Bunker
El Salvador	4655	MONTELUCIA	YSC2001	Purse seiner
Chinese Taipei	3771	FU LONG SHUN	BJ4704	Longliner
	12091	CHUAN FA SHIAN NO.288	BG3794	Longliner
	10679	CHI HONG NO.899	BH3418	Longliner
	4482	SHENQ BAO FA NO.168	BG3785	Longliner
	3333	MAN FU LONG	BJ3721	Longliner
	5337	YU LONG FA NO.22	BG3850	Longliner
	3663	MAN FU TSAI NO.11	BG3795	Longliner
	8876	MAN FU TSAI NO.168	BG3825	Longliner
	3721	SHIN JYI WANG NO.6	BG3824	Longliner
	8801	SHIN JAAN SHIN NO.7	BG3848	Longliner
	12069	WEN YU NO.168	BH3325	Longliner
	5363	CHUAN FA SHIAN NO.88	BJ4910	Longliner
	10933	MAN FU TSAI NO.5	BG3968	Longliner
	3849	SHIN JAAN SHIN	BG3817	Longliner
	3799	YU FENG NO.128	BG4052	Longliner
	3780	MAAN YIH FENG NO.26	BG4034	Longliner
	5215	MAN YI FENG NO.66	BG4006	Longliner
	10496	CHAO FA NO.368	BG3843	Longliner
	4607	MAN YING CAI NO.6	BG4023	Longliner
	3704	MAAN YIH FENG NO.16	BJ4590	Longliner
	5400	MAAN YIH FENG NO.266	BG4037	Longliner
	5406	YU LONG FA NO.36	BG4016	Longliner
	10591	CHI HSIANG NO.889	BH3417	Longliner
	3043	MAN FU TSAI NO.9	BG3940	Longliner
	3846	CHUAN HSIANG NO.368	BJ4814	Longliner
	9396	HONG XIN NO.112	BG3818	Longliner
	9888	YU FENG NO.513	BG3695	Longliner
	3496	TENN FA LI NO.8	BG3823	Longliner

12284	TENN TSAI JI	BG3907	Longliner
3870	CHUAN HSIANG NO.866	BG4051	Longliner
3872	CHUAN SHYANG NO.98	BG4050	Longliner
3883	FU YUAN NO.2	BI2583	Longliner
11775	CHI FA NO.1888	BH3495	Longliner