

Issue: 2

THE QUARTERLY CATCH E-Newsletter

BELIZE HIGH SEAS FISHERIES UNIT

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The Food and Agriculture Authority (FAO) declared 5th June as an International Day for the Fight Against IUU Fishing to raise awareness of the importance of the fight against IUU fishing. The purpose of this day is to draw attention to the threats posed by the IUU fishing activities to the sustainable use of fisheries resources as well as to the ongoing efforts to fight these activities.

The date of 5th June was chosen due to its significance in the fight against IUU fishing; this is the day that the Agreement on Port State Measures entered into force.

This day is an opportunity to highlight efforts taking place globally, regionally and nationally in the fight against illegal fishing.

Articles in this issue will examine how management measures can be used as tools in deterring IUU fishing. We hope you enjoy.

What You Should Know About Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

In our last issue, we wrote about Belize being recognized for its responsibility in helping to combat IUU fishing. Although Belize was able to rank 8th globally, this was not an easy achievement and the work continues. IUU fishing is a very serious global issue which is difficult to manage, and which threatens our marine ecosystem and most importantly has a negative impact on food security and livelihoods for small scale fisheries as well as significant loss of revenues. So how much do you know about these multifaceted operations taking place on the high seas?

It is estimated that between 11-26 million tons of fish are caught illegally each year which accounts for approximately US\$10-24 billion per year in global losses.

Large scale IUU fishing goes hand in hand with other criminal activities such as documentation fraud, tax evasion, money laundering, and illicit trade; and are linked to the activities of transnational organized crimes such as drug and human trafficking. This is why it is even more important for nations to take a stand in the fight against IUU fishing.

Illegal fishing often goes under the radar and is not easily detected; catches go unreported, sanctions are not dispensed due to either poor governance, no proper legislative framework or lack of human and institutional capacity. Stopping illegal fishing requires action at local, national and international levels as well as the political will of a country in taking the necessary actions.

ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING (IUU)



ILLEGAL FISHING

- **No authorization**
- **Non-compliance with national & international rules and regulations**

UNREPORTED FISHING

- **Not reporting catches**
- **Misreporting catches**
- **Violation of laws**



UNREGULATED FISHING

- **Fishing vessels has no nationality**
- **Fishing activities endangers fish**





Nibbles

Belize's Primary Fisheries Legislations

1. High Seas Fisheries Act, 2013
2. High Seas Fishing Licensing Regulations
3. High Seas Fishing Sanctions Regulations
4. High Seas Fishing MCS Regulation

National Plans & Policies

1. Fleet Development Policy
2. Licensing Policy
3. Inspection Policy
4. At-Sea Observer Policy
5. IPOA-IUU
6. IPOA-Sharks
7. Tropical Tuna Management Plan
8. Swordfish Management Plan
9. FAD Management Plan

Current RFMO Membership

Belize is currently members of the following RFMO

1. Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
2. International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

The government of Belize recognizes the importance of taking measures in combating IUU fishing not only in our territorial sea and EEZ, but also on the high seas. It has adopted several important legislations and polices in this regard, such as a National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (NPOA-IUU), inter alia, and have implemented key tools such as vessel monitoring, licensing and catch documentation schemes. Many people do not understand the risk that IUU fishing poses to our future and the economic development of our countries. In the short-term IUU fishing can affect marine habitats, can cause loss of fish for future harvest and loss of income and employment for legitimate fishers. The long-term effects are even more disconcerting as it can deplete local and potentially global fish stocks to the point where they become commercially unviable or even to the brink of extinction. Illegal fishing can also destabilize labor standards, alter markets of legally caught fish and influence the economic stability of a country, especially coastal developing nations such as Belize.

Legal measures, such as adoption or adherence to international agreements such as the Port State Measures Agreement which was designed to stop illegally caught fish from entering the markets, monitoring and surveillance systems and programs, or refusing services to vessels engaged in IUU fishing are often implemented at national, regional or international levels to combat such practices. However, while these measures, advancements in technology and the adoption of international policies have helped to deter illegal fishers, these offenders are always looking for new ways to manipulate the system. Therefore, nations should remain vigilant and proactive in doing their part in the fight against IUU fishing.

Say Hello to Our New Logo

The BHSFU will be launching a new logo shortly as part of an overall rebranding initiative. Many will agree that the old logo had a familiar warmth and charm; however, change is inevitable, especially in this fast-evolving industry. It was decided that a fresh, vibrant and distinctive evolution of our logo was warranted to revolutionize our industry presence.

While the old logo was distinctive and serious, it was agreed that a little deviation from the norm to something more unique, jovial and catchy would more comprehensively encompass the various dimensions of the BHSFU. Nonetheless, the new logo still reflects the acronym which defines the Administration, adding an element of vibrance by incorporating graphics and a color palette which are reflective of the fishing industry and the high seas. The exuberance embodied in the new and refined logo is symbolic of the organization's zeal in adapting to an evolving industry whilst maintaining the spirit of its continuous presence. Therefore, keep an eye out for the new logo as it starts appearing on documents, licenses and certificates. Over the next few months you will see variations of the new logo that has been adapted to align perfectly with the various media for which it will be used such as this newsletter, the website, and social media page. Nonetheless, this new design will not impede the important business and service which you have come to know and appreciate; it is simply a new look to greet you and the world as we continue to provide first class service.



Vessel Compliance – 2018

As part of our strategic objectives and to ensure that our high seas fishing fleet remain compliant with national and international rules and regulations, the BHSFU have implemented an annual vessel compliance evaluation of the fishing fleet. Vessels are evaluated based on compliance with the following criteria:

- National Regulations
- RFMO Regulations
- Catch Reporting
- Vessel Monitoring
- Licensing
- Financial Obligation
- At-Sea Observer and Inspection

In 2018, the Compliance Committee evaluated 40 operational vessels and fifty-eight (58%) of these vessels received an excellent performance rating. Twenty (20%) received an above average rating and the remaining twenty-two (22%) received an average performance rating. Notably, none of the vessels received a poor performance rating in 2018.

Special mention is being given to the following vessels as they are the top performers receiving an overall percentile average of 95 and above.

- **TXORI BERRI**
- **PESCAMERO SEIS**
- **SOLEY**
- **CHUNG KUO NO.212**
- **CHUNG KUO NO.222**
- **CHUNG KUO NO.288**
- **CHUNG KUO NO.37**
- **CHUNG KUO NO.39**
- **CHUNG KUO NO.31**
- **CHUNG KUO NO.32**
- **PLAYA DE AZKORRI**

BHSFU Personnel Graduates from the IMO International Law Institute



(L-R: Prof. David Attard, Mr. Kitack Lim, Mr. Robert Robinson)

On June 15th, 2019, the IMO International Law Institute (IMLI) held its 30th Commencement exercise for the class of 2018-2019. Amongst these graduates was **Mr. Robert Robinson, Deputy Director of the BHSFU**. Through a fellowship provided by the Nippon Foundation, one of IMLI's generous donors, Mr. Robinson embarked on this highly intensive 8-month programme of studies after being nominated by the Registrar of Merchant Shipping, Mr. Claude B.F. Haylock under the advice of the Director for High Seas Fisheries Mrs. Valarie Lanza.

Studying a wide range of subjects in both public and private international maritime law, Mr. Robinson was conferred with a Master of Humanities in International Maritime Legislation after successfully completing all the requirements of the programme of studies. Mr. Robinson had the privilege to study under the tutelage of the Institute's Director, Prof. David

J. Attard who is also the Vice President of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). The Graduation Address was delivered by Mr. Kitack Lim, the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization, who emphasized the instrumentality of IMLI (through its alumni) in serving the rule of international maritime law.

Mr. Robinson's knowledge of international maritime law will undoubtedly provide a solid foundation for the continued development of Belize's maritime industry. Mr. Robinson is one of two Belizean scholars who have had the opportunity to study at IMLI. His newly acquired expertise will prove beneficial to Belize's budding shipping with particular regard to the effective implementation of IMO instruments and other internationally agreed legal maritime regulations and standards.

The BHSFU congratulates Mr. Robinson on the successful completion of his studies and welcomes him home; and looks forward to the contributions he will make to the maritime and fisheries industries.

Licensing as a Management Tool to Combat IUU Fishing

By: Delice Pinkard – Senior Fisheries Officer



The negative impact of IUU fishing is enormous and it is within the mandate of Fisheries Flag States to create and implement effective monitoring, control and surveillance measures through their national legislation to properly control and monitor the activities of their fishing vessels.

One very effective control measure to combat IUU fishing is to have in place a regime for authorizing fishing and related activities through a licensing system. The proper use of fishing authorizations gives a country the legal basis to control the fishing activities of its vessels because it provides specific areas of control when it comes to fish quotas, acceptable fishing gears, and areas of operation, inter alia. A licensing system also allows data to be stored or shared globally through the requirement of FAO's global record and even through the requirement of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO) so that this data can be shared between flag states and the public. The usage of a licensing system is effective in keeping track of vessels and their fishing activities and helps in combating IUU fishing because it directly connects a vessel to its fishing capacities and limitations. It allows a vessel to conduct fishing or fishing related operations and simultaneously defines the scope of actual operations of that vessel, therefore allowing the flag state to have better control. Belize, through the auspices of the BHSFU, have adopted national legislation to develop and properly implement a transparent and effective licensing system as well as other complementary MCS measures.

It is undeniable that a licensing system within the structure of each country's MCS regime is an effective management tool which helps in combating IUU fishing.

Catch Documentation Scheme and its Role in Mitigating IUU Fishing

By: Ernie Howe- Fisheries Officer



As international trade in fish products increase to meet growing demands, traceability of these products at all stages of production have become even more important to ensure the laundering of IUU caught fish products does not occur.

For this reason, the EU Catch Documentation Scheme is one of the most important trade related measures that has been implemented to help combat trade of IUU fish products. The document certifies that catches have been made in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and international conservation and management measures. Belize currently utilizes the EU Catch Certification Scheme to facilitate the exportation of fishery products harvested by Belize registered vessels, to access European markets.

While Catch Certificates only facilitate trade with EU Countries, the statistical documentation scheme is another programme which facilitates the exportation of Belize's fishery products to various members States of the relevant RFMO which regulates the programme. While these programmes only regulate specific tuna species, it is an important indicator that can help States to identify possible IUU activities. Other certificates such as the EUR.1 and Certificate of Origin are also similar certificates that allows for traceability of fishery products. The collective use of these various export documents allows the BHSFU to establish the legitimacy of an operation and the legal status of the fishery products being exported from its earliest point in the supply chain in order to prevent, deter and eliminate any form of IUU activity.

How Vessel Monitoring helps detect IUU Fishing

Vessel monitoring has become a global requirement in most commercial, domestic and high seas fisheries operations because it helps authorities to monitor the position and movements of vessels. With proper implementation and the appropriate exchange of information, vessel monitoring can help to detect and therefore prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing.



**By: Stanley Burgess
Monitoring Officer**

VMS plays an important function when tracking vessels that fish in areas beyond national jurisdictions. When utilized effectively, these systems enable greater monitoring of a vessel's activity in restricted or closed areas and facilitates advance notification to authorities when vessel is approaching a port. It also allows Administrations to know when a vessel is operating outside of its authorized area and most importantly when transshipment is occurring at sea. Vessel tracking enables greater examination of vessel's movements by time and location which helps authorities to detect suspicious activities and patterns. Furthermore, the aid of electronic catch reporting will eventually replace paper reporting requirements which will allow for real-time catch reporting data and will significantly reduce the manipulation of catch data. It is also an important tool when used together with catch documentation schemes because it provides empirical data to verify catch reports that helps track fisheries product from the net to the plate. VMS is undoubtedly an important tool in the monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing activities and the global fight against IUU fishing.