

## Fishing Vessel Notice

Date: 03-March-2023

Notice Number 007-2023

To: All Ship Owners, Operators, Deputy Registrars, Resident Agents, Representatives, and other Stakeholders

Subject: **SUBMISSION OF INDEPENDENT AT SEA OBSERVER REPORTS**

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In accordance with Part III, of Belize's Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Regulation, an observer program shall be established by the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit for the purpose of collecting and reporting of reliable and accurate information for scientific, management and compliance purposes.

Noting the requirements for at-sea observer coverage by international regulations, Belize is obligated to ensure that their vessels comply with this requirement. At-Sea Observer activities are performed primarily by our providers, but some vessels still utilize independent observers. As a result, this Administration require that all reports resulting from observer coverage carried out independently be submitted after each deployment activity involving observer activities. This is to establish a standardize system for the collection of at-sea observer data and its reporting to the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations to which Belize subscribes.

### **REPORTING OF DATA FROM INDEPENDENT OBSERVER COMPANIES**

While this Administration has no preference on the reporting format, we do request that the information and data submitted are consistent with the data submission requirements as contained in our At-Sea Observer Policy, which includes, inter alia, the following:

- a. Details of the vessel, including size, capacity, and equipment.
- b. Summary of the observed ship, which will include information such as the observer's name and identification, degree of experience, dates of embarkation and disembarkation.
- c. Comprehensive catch, effort and environmental information for each set that occurred while the observer was onboard the vessel, regardless if the set/haul was actually observed. This includes the target species, location fished, and type of gear used.
- d. Fishing methods, including mitigation measures in use while fishing. The observer data should record/describe mitigation measures, including the configurations that were in use during the observed period.

- e. Observed catch information for each period of observation, including the time at start and end of observation, the number, type and size of hooks observed, the observed catch in number and weight for all species caught to the extent possible.
- f. Biological measurements taken of individual targeted species, as much as possible, including its condition, length, weight, sex and details of samples, that were taken for analysis.
- g. Information on by-catch species taken or not retained and should include counts by species and their status.
- h. Interaction and/or retention of seabirds and sea turtles and their status.

The submission of this report is mandatory for all vessels utilizing independent observers on board Belize flagged vessels. Therefore, in the first instance an email will be sent to all vessel owners to confirm which vessels are utilizing independent observers and how often these observers are placed on board to determine at which interval these observer reports are to be submitted.

In addition, the completion of the ICCAT reporting form as contained in Annex I will need to be completed after each observed trip and submitted along with the observer report. This will alleviate the request for and submission of a consolidated report at the beginning of each year for the previous year's activities.

Failure to provide this information will result in the vessel being required to receive a Belize authorized observer on board their vessel.



**Please direct all queries and concern to:**  
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