

Fishing Vessel Notice

Date: 21 August 2023

Notice Number 009-2023

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

Subject: **IMPLEMENTATION OF ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM ONBOARD BELIZE FLAGGED FISHING VESSELS.**

This notice serves to announce a significant development in our ongoing efforts to promote sustainable fishing practices and enhance fisheries management. As part of our commitment to responsible fishing and safeguarding marine resources for future generations, we are excited to inform you of the upcoming implementation of an Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP).

Electronic Monitoring represents a crucial step forward in modernizing the way we monitor and manage fishing activities. This state-of-the-art technology will revolutionize data collection and reporting, ensuring greater accuracy, transparency, and efficiency in our fisheries management efforts. We understand the vital role that fishing plays in our communities and economies, and this program aims to balance economic interests with the long-term health of our oceans.

Key Features of the Electronic Monitoring Program:

1. Enhanced Monitoring: The EMP will provide enhanced monitoring of vessel activities, thereby enabling authorities, owners, and operators to monitor fishing operations and collect data. This feature will help prevent illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and promote compliance with regulations.

2. Video and Sensor Data: High-definition cameras and sensors will be installed on vessels to record fishing operations and collect essential data, such as catch composition and bycatch. This equipment will automatically collect data which will aid in the decision-making process.

3. Data Security: We understand the importance of protecting your proprietary information. All data collected through the EMP will be securely stored and managed, with access restricted to authorized personnel only.

4. Streamlined Reporting: The EMP will significantly reduce the burden of manual reporting. The data collected will be used to verify data provided in fishing logbooks thereby increasing the reliability of that data.

5. Improved Compliance: The EMP will serve as a tool for ensuring compliance with fishing regulations, enhancing our collective efforts to conserve fish stocks and preserve marine ecosystems.

Implementation Timeline:

The EMP will be implemented in 3 phases. The initial phase will be a Pilot Project which will implement the program design. During this phase, the vessels selected for participation will aid the BHSFU in refining the program design and making necessary adjustments. Vessels will NOT be evaluated for compliance issues during this phase with the exception of egregious violations of Belize’s high seas fishing regulations. Vessels selected for the initial phase of implementation will be notified individually, along with detailed instructions on installation procedures and program design.

Phase two will officially launch the program and expand it to cover additional vessels engaged in priority fisheries. This includes all vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species that are subject to the jurisdiction of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations. Finally, phase three will roll out the program to cover the remaining Belize flagged fishing vessels.

Electronic Monitoring will mark a positive turning point in sustainable fisheries management and this Administration is committed to providing all necessary support during this process. Your cooperation and active participation are vital in making this initiative a success and we anticipate a smooth transition in the implementation of this program. We look forward to working closely with you to ensure its seamless integration into your fishing operations.

Thank you for your continued dedication to responsible fishing practices.



Please direct all queries and concern to:
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