BELIZE HIGH SEAS FISHERIES UNIT
BHSFU

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Fishing Vessel Circular Letter No. 072
16 September 2026
Series: RFMO-2026

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

Subject: **REVISED CATCH REPORTING FORMS.**

Reference: ICCAT Rec. 24-01 para. 16, 17, 18 and 43. S.I. No. 39 of 2014, Part II.

BACKGROUND

The Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit (BHSFU) has observed that catch reports from Belize-flagged longline and purse seine vessels have been consistently submitted in PDF format. While these reports meet the minimum legal requirements, they create challenges for efficient data entry and processing, increasing the risk of duplication, and introducing potential human error during manual transcription.

To improve accuracy, streamline reporting, and align with international best practices in fisheries data management, the BHSFU is introducing a revised reporting format for the submission of catch and effort data. This adjustment will also facilitate the timely preparation of Belize's statistical obligations to relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), including ICCAT and IATTC.

MANAGEMENT MEASURE

i. Submission Format

Effective immediately, all longline and purse seine vessels licensed under the Belize High Seas Fishing Act are required to submit their monthly catch and effort reports in Excel (.xlsx) or Comma-Separated Values (.csv) format. Reports submitted in PDF format will no longer be accepted. The operator is also required to provide their discharge/landing report monthly or after each discharge inspection is completed. The data on this official report will be verified along with the excel data provided.

Purse seine catch data must be reported by individual successful fishing set, rather than aggregated by date.

The FADs data sheet must be completed and submitted electronically in Excel format.

Effort data is essential, particularly the duration of each fishing set. The start/end time or total duration of each set should therefore be accurately recorded.

Bycatch data must also be fully recorded and reported, where applicable.

ii. Submission Timeline

Reports must continue to be submitted monthly within fifteen (15) days after the end of each month or after every fishing trip. The Master's signature is not required at the time of submission; however, a consolidated and signed annual catch report will be required at the end of each calendar year.

iii. Compliance

Failure to submit reports in the required format and within the stipulated timeframe may result in administrative sanctions in accordance with the *High Seas Fishing (Sanctions) Regulations*.

iv. Support

To facilitate compliance, the BHSFU has developed a standardized reporting template in Excel format. This template, along with instructions will be circulated via email with this Circular. Technical assistance is available to vessel operators and agents during the transition period.

Should you need additional information and guidance regarding the implementation of the revised catch reporting requirements please contact our administration.

Please direct all queries and concerns to:
Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit
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