

Ecuador assigns observers to the vessels that carry out fishing activities in the WCPFC Area, trained, approved and registered to be able to cover both Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AGAINST IUU

3.8.4. Observers

The Observer Program is one of the most important instruments for obtaining quality scientific information, as well as being one of the key activities in the sustainable management and management of fisheries worldwide; they are contemplated in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995) and facilitate the monitoring of fishing activities, including the monitoring of landings, taking detailed information on target species, bycatch and fishing effort, among others aspects of interest that contribute to the establishment of fishing management guidelines and decisions with an ecosystemic approach¹.

The Ministry of Aquaculture and Fisheries through the Undersecretary of Fisheries Resources has implemented on-board observer programs to obtain solid, transparent and immediate scientific information in fisheries of commercial interest.

These programs are key pieces in fisheries research, which requires fishery biologists and related professionals with experience in data collection on board who can sample and record catch information; It is estimated that monthly these professionals receive a value that represents a fair remuneration for the work performed.

They are functions of the observer:

- Record the details of the vessel's operation (eg, time dedicated to the search, fishing, navigation, etc., and details of the sets);
- Take samples of the catches to analyze the biological characteristics;
- Record the biological data of the species captured;
- Record the amount and composition of the by-catch and other biological data;
- Record all entanglement and incidental mortality of birds, reptiles and mammals;
- Prepare reports of their observations using the observation forms approved by the Institution.
- Collaborate with the captain of the vessel in the registry and notification of the capture if necessary;
- Carry out other tasks determined by mutual agreement between the parties;
- Collect information on the loss of fishing gear and waste disposal by fishing vessels at sea.

Additionally, as a member of the IATTC, our country participates in an observer program for the tuna purse-seine fleet for class 6 (CIAT classification). The 70% covered by CIAT and the other 30% is covered by the national program PROBECUADOR, according to Art. XIII and Annex 2 of the Agreement on the International Program for the Conservation of Dolphins (AIDCP).