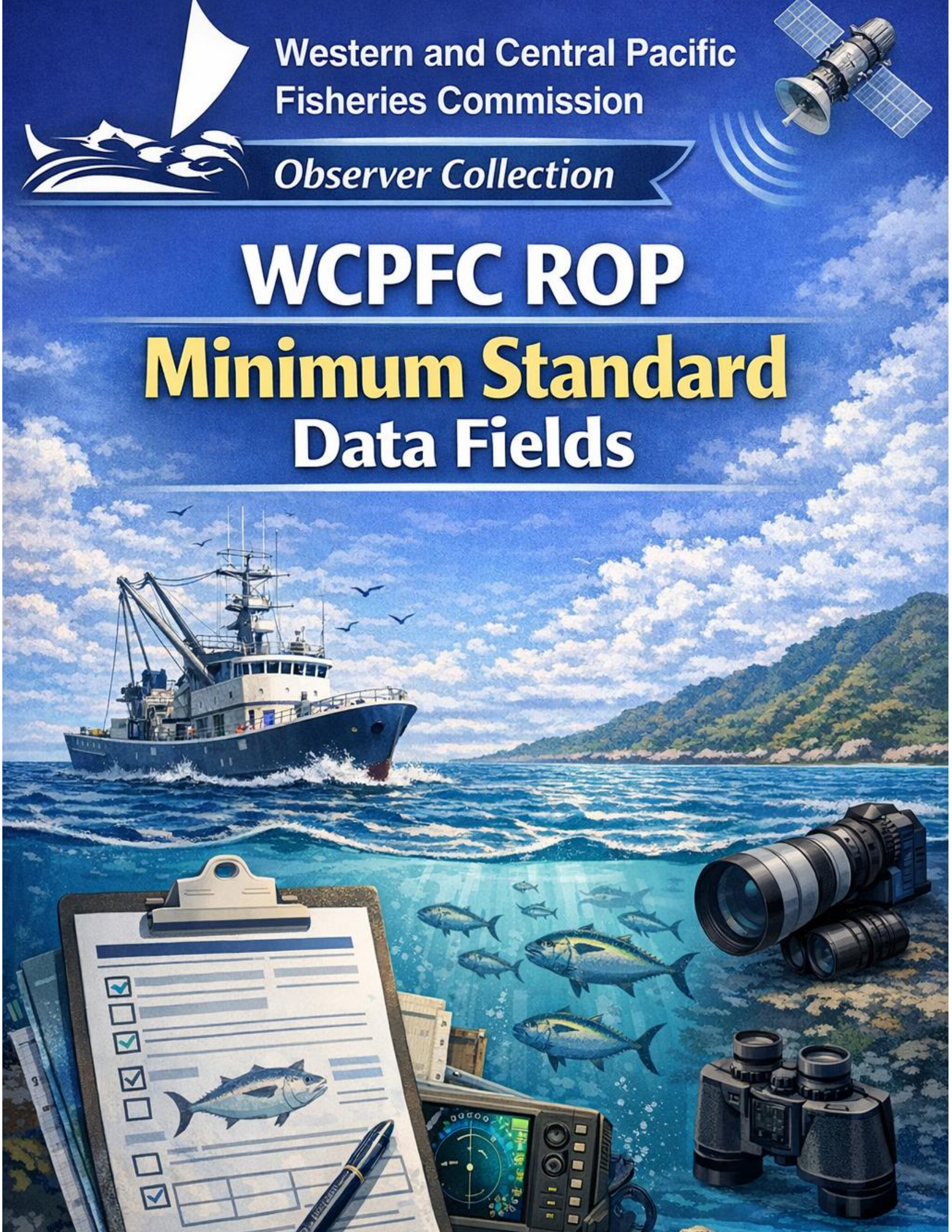
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Observer Collection

WCPFC ROP

Minimum Standard Data Fields



WCPFC ROP MINIMUM STANDARD DATA FIELDS (*Revised 2026)*

The format used to present the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (ROP) Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDF) for collection by observers may be determined by individual observer programmes to suit their operational requirements. However, all programmes authorised to operate under the WCPFC ROP are expected to ensure that the full set of agreed MSDF is collected in a consistent and reliable manner.

Following the work of the Intersessional Working Group on the Regional Observer Programme (IWG-ROP), and as agreed by the Twenty-Second Regular Annual Session of the Commission (WCPFC22), a total of 20 data fields have been removed from the 2016 MSDF version. These removals were intended to streamline observer data collection while maintaining the core dataset required to support Commission Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs), scientific analysis, and compliance monitoring. The latest set of MSDF contained herein therefore reflects the current minimum data requirements approved by the Commission.

Observer programmes may develop their own forms and data collection formats to capture these fields. However, the FFA/SPC harmonised observer forms and formats, already used by many programmes across the Pacific region, provide an established example of how the MSDF can be structured in practice. These forms are available through the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme (SPC-OFP) website and may be adapted by programmes necessary to meet national operational requirements while ensuring compatibility with regional data standards.

Unless otherwise instructed when completing any observer form, the following requirements apply:

- All fields must be clearly printed in English.
- Abbreviations must not be used unless specifically instructed within the form.
- Appropriate codes must be used where indicated.
- Every form must be clearly labelled with, at minimum, the observer's name and trip number to ensure traceability.
- If information is not available or not applicable, a dash (-) must be entered in the field. Fields must not be left blank, as this creates uncertainty during data entry as to whether the information was unavailable or simply not collected.
- All Yes/No responses must be clearly circled.
- All units of measurement or power must be clearly indicated (circled) where required.

These instructions are intended to ensure consistency, completeness, and accuracy in observer data recording, thereby supporting effective data entry, verification, and analysis across observer programmes operating within the WCPFC ROP framework.

Comment

The IWG-ROP is currently continuing its review of the MSDF to assess potential additional data fields required to support the implementation of existing and future CMMs. As part of this ongoing work, there may also be further discussion regarding the possible removal or modification of some existing fields, with the objective of ensuring that the MSDF remains aligned with Commission requirements while maintaining a practical and efficient data collection framework for observer programmes operating under the WCPFC ROP.

GENERAL VESSEL AND TRIP INFORMATION FOR ALL VESSEL TYPES		
VESSEL IDENTIFICATION		#
Name of Vessel	Name must be clearly written, make sure any numbers connected with the names are included. i.e. "Moonlight No 6".	1
International Radio Call Sign	The vessel call sign is usually issued to the vessel by the Flag State in accordance with IMO regulations and procedures. This can become the WCPFC identification number of the vessel.	3
Hull Markings consistent with CMM 2004-03	The hull markings should be consistent with CMM 2004-03; these are virtually the same as the FAO standards on vessel markings except that a few letters disallowed in the FAO standards are permitted in CMM 2004- 03 standards.	5
"WCPFC Identification Number" WIN markings consistent with CMM 2004-03	If the vessel does not have an IRCS number, the flag State must create and issue a "WCPFC Identification number" or WIN number and use this as the vessel identifier. In most cases, the IRCS number and WIN would be the same number.	6
WIN format for markings consistent with CMM 2004-03	WIN if used separate from IRCS shall consist of letters and numbers to be painted on the hull or super structure.	7
International Maritime Organization 'IMO' or Lloyd's Register number 'LR'.	Effective 1 January 2016 all fishing vessels at least 100GT or 100GRT fishing in the Convention Area beyond the area of national jurisdiction must have IMO or LR numbers - Observers are asked to collect these in the appropriate data field.	8
VESSEL TRIP INFORMATION		
Date and Time of departure from port	The day and time the vessel leaves port to start its fishing campaign. I.e. lifts its anchor or lets the ropes free from the wharf.	10
Port of Departure	Name of the port of departure - as a help also include the country.	11
Date and Time of return to port	The day and time the vessel returns to a port (usually taken when vessel either drops the anchor or ties up to a wharf or another vessel in port; at the completion of its trip.	12
Port of Return	Name of the port where the vessel returns- as a help also include the country.	13
OBSERVER INFORMATION		
Observer Name	Your name clearly printed using the format - First name First - Last name Last (Do not use initials) an observer with the first name John last name Smith would write John Smith (Not JS - J Smith or Smith John).	14
Nationality of Observer	Country where the observer's passport is issued.	15
Observer Provider - country and/or organization	Organisation that employs the observer and has organised the provision of the observer to the vessel. In the case of the Philippine, it most likely would be: BFAR National Observer Programme: Philippines.	16
Date, Time, and Location of embarkation	The day and time the observer leaves the port; to start their observer trip (Note in most cases this will be the same as the vessel start dates and times)	17
Date, Time, and Location of disembarkation	The day and time the observer returns to a port at the completion of their trip. (Note in most cases this will be the same as the vessel return dates and times)	18

CREW INFORMATION		
Name of Captain	The captains name clearly printed in the format - First name First -Last names Last (Do not use initials) - This may be difficult to determine particularly with some Asian vessels, therefore write the name the way the captain is named on paperwork or from identification he/she shows you	21
Nationality of Captain	Passport nationality of the captain, Note - in your written notes if you wish you can record the captain's birth country, if this is available, i.e. Capt. is Korean born and speaks in Korean but holds an NZ Passport.	22
Identification document	Document that confirms nationality i.e. passport "field not on form"	23
Name of Fishing Master	The fishing master name clearly printed in the format - First name First - Last names Last (Do not use initials) This may be difficult to determine particularly with some Asian vessels so write the name the way the fishing master is named on paperwork or from identification he/she shows you.	24
Nationality of Fishing Master	Passport nationality of the fishing master, if the vessel has one that is separate from the captain. Note - in your written notes if you wish you can record the fishing master birth country, if this is available, i.e. Fishing master is Japanese born but holds an Australian Passport.	25
Identification document	Document that confirms nationality i.e. passport "field not on form"	26
Other Crew	Total the number of the other crew on board and if possible, indicate the numbers of each nationality i.e. 8 Philippines 6 Samoans 4 Taiwanese, etc.	27
Total Number of Crew	Add the total number of people on the vessel including all the officers captain, etc. (Do not count yourself in this number, even if you are on the crew list for insurance purposes.)	28
VESSEL ATTRIBUTES		
Vessel Cruising Speed	Cruising speed of the vessel is the speed the vessel travels, which allows it to optimize its fuel usage, but also gets the vessel along at a good speed. It is not the top speed of the vessel.	29
Freezer type	Indicate by answering Yes/ No to all the different types of refrigeration methods the vessel has on board, many vessels may have more than one type of freezer.	31
VESSEL ELECTRONICS	*Indicate "Yes or No" if on board. In your written notes you may like to indicate the numbers of each on board as well as the special uses some of this equipment may be used for.*	
Depth Sounder	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted.	36
Sonar	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted.	41
Radio/ Satellite Buoys	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted.	42
Doppler Current Meter	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted.	43
Expendable Bathythermograph (XBT)	Indicate Yes if on board No if not sighted.	44
Satellite Communications Service (Phone/Fax/Email numbers)	Indicate all the vessel Satellite numbers if the vessel has Satellite communications on board.	45
Fishery Information Services	Indicate Yes if used by the Vessel board - No if not sighted	46

LONGLINE INFORMATION AND DATA		
VESSEL ATTRIBUTES		
Refrigeration Method	Indicate by answering Yes/No to all the different types of refrigeration methods the vessel has on board as indicated on the RLL-1 Form - many vessels may have more than one type of freezer.	48
GENERAL GEAR ATTRIBUTES		
Mainline Material	The materials used in the mainline of the vessel some examples are Kuralon- Braided nylon, - Monofilament Nylon there are many more.	49
Mainline Diameter	What is the diameter of the mainline; you can measure this with small calipers if you have them or just ask the Engineer or Bosun. Measurement is usually recorded in Millimetres.	51
Branch Line Material(s)	A branch line can consist of one type of material like monofilament or it can be made up of many different materials like braided nylon wire trace and mono filament, etc.	52
SPECIAL GEAR ATTRIBUTES		
Wire Trace	**At the trip level** indicate Yes or No -if the vessel uses wire traces on some or all their lines (Yes) or if no wire traces are used then record No. If wire traces are used on all lines during the trip, then record "ALL LINES" If the vessel used wire traces on certain branch lines during the trip record, where possible, information on the location of the branch line where used (for example “used on first and tenth branch lines from the float”). If the proportion of leaders that are wire varies within a trip, record the average based on a sample of ten baskets in different sets.	53
Line Shooter	Indicate Y or No - Some vessels allow the long line to drag over the side and regulate depth-of setting by the speed of the vessels, many long liners have a special piece of equipment that regulates the speed of the line going into the water and therefore along with a constant setting speed of the vessel allow the line to be set at uniform depth along the length of the line.	56
Automatic Bait Thrower	Indicate Y or No - Most vessels manually throw the branch lines with the bait away from the wash, especially if the bait is vulnerable to bird strikes. However, there are some vessels that may use automatic bait throwers, so the bait is constantly thrown away from the wash at a determined distance.	57
Automatic Branch Line attached	Indicate Y or No - Most lines are attached manually at a regular distance along the mainline by a crewman, however some vessels may have an automatic branch line mechanism that attaches the branch at regular intervals.	58
Hook Type	**Record at the set level** what type of hook or hooks is used. Examples are J Hooks - Circle Hooks-Offset Circle, etc. The vessel usually uses one type but some may use a couple of types. *Note that the SPC/FFA observer programme uses an excellent SPC-produced "Terminal Gear Identification Guide"; which clearly identifies the most common hook types and sizes	59
Hook Size	**Record at the set level** the size of the hooks used, if not sure ask the Bosun or refer to a hook catalogue. *Note that the SPC/FFA observer programme uses an excellent SPC-produced "Terminal Gear Identification Guide"; which clearly identifies the most common hook types and sizes.	60
Tori Line	Record Yes or No **at the set level** whether the vessel uses a single or double Tori lines when setting (0=none, 1=single tori line and	62

	2=double tori line). A Tori line can have several different designs but is basically a line with ribbons and other attachments to scare birds away from the branch line baits.	
Side Setting with Bird Curtain *and weighted branch lines*	Record Yes or No at **the set level**– whether the vessel used side-setting with bird curtain also record whether weighted branch lines were in use	67
Weighted Branch Lines- *(Added WCPFC9)*	At the trip level record whether or not the vessel uses weighted branch lines (Yes or No). If yes, record the mass of the weight attached to the branch line. If more than one type of weighting is used during a trip, describe each type and indicate the proportion based on a sample of ten baskets in different sets.	68
Shark Lines	At the set level, record the number of shark lines (branch lines running directly off the longline floats or drop lines) observed. Where possible, record the length of this line for each set.	70
Blue Dyed Bait	Record Yes or No **at the set level**-whether the vessel used bait that has been dyed especially to look blue.	71
Distance between Weight and Hook (in metres),	Measure the distance in metres from where the bottom of the weight is attached on the branch line to the eye of the hook.	72
Deep Setting Line Shooter	Record Yes or No at **the set level**– whether the vessel used a deep setting line shooter.	73
Management off Offal Discharge	Record Yes or No at the set level- whether the vessel used the management of offal discharge**.**	74
Strategic Offal Disposal	Record Yes or No at **the trip level** whether the vessel used strategic offal disposal (dumping offal to attract seabirds away from hooks, or not dumping offal *Note that most vessels discard their offal from processed fish by different methods, describe what the vessel does- example the vessel may just throw it over the side as they process the fish, they may accumulate offal in baskets and throw it over in one go, they may have machines that blends the offal into a liquid form and spray over the side, they may use it to deter bird strikes when setting, etc.	75
Date and Time of start of set	Date and time the first buoy is thrown into the water to start the setting of the line.	76
Latitude and Longitude start of set	Take the GPS reading at the time the first buoy is thrown into the water.	79
Date and Time of end of set	Date and time the last buoy (usually has radio beacon attached) at the end of the mainline thrown into the water.	80
Latitude and Longitude end of set	Take the GPS reading at the time the last buoy is thrown into the water.	81
Total Number of Baskets or Floats	A basket is the sum of all the hooks set between two buoys on a longline; usually it is the same as the number of floats set minus one.	82
Number of Hooks per basket, or number of hooks between floats	How many hooks set from one buoy to another, the number is usually constant along the line, but can vary in some cases, also if the vessel also sets a branch line on the buoy count this as a hook between floats as well.	83
Total Number of Hooks used in a set	How many hooks are used, usually calculated by multiplying number of baskets by the number of hooks between the baskets.	84

Line Shooter Speed	If the vessel has a line shooter, it will normally have an indicator to show its running speed, as well as a sound indicator or light, that beeps at a regular interval, when it is time to attach a branch line.	85
Length of Float-line	Length of the line that is attached to the floats, get a coil and measure the length. It usually remains the same throughout the trip.	86
Distance between Branch-lines	Distance the branch lines are attached to the mainline can be determined easily if vessel has a line shooter with electronic attachment indicator.	87
Length of Branch-lines	Measure the length of a sample of the of the majority of branch lines used, some may vary slightly due to repairs.	88
Time-depth Recorders (TDRs)	Does the vessel use TDRs on its line, record the number it may use and where along the main line they attach them to the branch lines.	89
Number of Light Sticks	**At the set level** indicate whether the vessel uses light sticks on its line, record the number it used, and record, where possible, information on the location (for example "used on first and tenth branch lines from the float").	90
Target Species	What species does the vessel target - Tuna (BET YFT) Swordfish, Sharks. Etc.	91
Bait Species	**At the set level**, record the bait species used Pilchard, Sardine, Squid, artificial bait, etc.	92
Date and Time of start of haul	Date and time the first buoy of the mainline is hauled from the water to start the haul.	95
Date and Time of end of haul	Date and time the last buoy of the mainline is hauled from the water to end the haul.	96
Total Amount of Baskets, floats monitored by observers in a single set	How many floats or baskets are monitored by the observer. Observers can monitor this by counting the number of floats they watch coming on board.	98
INFORMATION ON CATCH FOR EACH SET		
Hook Number, between Floats	The hook number that the fish is caught on count hooks from the last float hauled on board to next float hauled on board.	100
Species code	FAO code of species caught	101
Length of Fish	Measure length of species using the recommended measurement style.	102
Length Measurement code	Code the type of measurement used i.e. all tunas are UF Upper Jaw to Fork length.	103
Gender	Sex the species, if possible, if species gonads are checked but it's difficult to determine use indeterminate "I" if not seen i.e. on a whole fish use Unknown "U"	104
Condition when Caught	Use "Condition Codes" to indicate status when caught. For each observed silky and oceanic whitetip shark, sea turtle, seabird or marine mammal, add three new codes: hooked in mouth', hooked deeply (throat or stomach)', and hooked externally'.	105
Fate	What happens to the fish after its caught use the Fate Codes supplied	106
Condition when Released	Use "Condition Codes" to indicate status when released to the sea. For each observed silky and oceanic whitetip shark, sea turtle, seabird or marine mammal, record 'hook and/or line removed'.	107

Tag Recovery information	Record as much as information as possible on any Tags recovered	108
PURSE SEINE INFORMATION AND DATA		
VESSEL AND REATED ATTRIBUTES		
Number of Onboard Support Vessels	How many vessels are on board other than the net skiff, i.e. speedboats light boats, tow boats.	109
Aircraft Make/Model/Colour/ Call Sign/Registration	If the vessel has a helicopter on board record all the details, usually you can get information from the Pilot.	110
GEAR ATTRIBUTES		
Maximum Depth of Net	Ask the engineer what the maximum net depth is	111
Maximum Length of Net	Ask the engineer what the maximum length of the net is	112
Net Mesh Size	Measure and record the net mesh size of the main body of the net	113
Brailer Capacity Sizes	Record the size of the main brailer used in mT if there is more than one brailer record the other sizes as well.	114
INFORMATION ON DAILY ACTIVITIES		
Date and Time of Start of daily activities	Record Date and when you start each day, record both the /ships time and the UTC time at the same time. Be aware that dates may differ between UTC and ships time.	115
Time of Activity	Record Ships Time for each activity as indicated on the activity codes table.	116
Latitude and Longitude of activity	Take the position of each activity.	117
SCHOOL INFORMATION		
Method of Detection of School	How did the vessel first detect the fish - use the best code	119
Type of School Association	Use codes to describe type of school, remembering that fish feeding on bait fish with no floating objects around is considered unassoc.	120
SET INFORMATION		
Observer's record of Date and Time of Start of Set	Record the Start of Set usually recorded when the pelican hook is released, and net skiff slides in to the water taking the net with it	121
Observers record of Date and Time of End of Set	Record when the net skiff is hauled on board after the set	122
Vessel's record of Date and Time of Start of Set	Record what time and date the vessel has entered in the Log sheet for the same set (note do not adjust your time to suit the vessel log it may be different by a few minutes, this is acceptable.	123
Retained Catch, by species	Record all species that are retained using the FAO codes	124
Discards, by species	Record all species that are discarded using the FAO codes	125
Tag Recovery information	Record as much as information as possible on any Tags recovered	126
INFORMATION ON CATCH FOR EACH SET		
Species code	Record all species that are measured using the FAO Species codes	127
Length Measurement code	Record all species as per the measurement methods given in the codes	128
Length	Length Measured in Centimetres	129
POLE-AND-LINE INFORMATION AND DATA		
GEAR ATTRIBUTES		
Automatic Polling Devices	Record the number of automatic polling devices and comment whether they are used regularly or not.	133

INFORMATION ON DAILY ACTIVITIES		
Date and Time of start of daily activities	Write the date and time that the vessel uses and record all activities using this time	134
Time of activity	Record time of every activity using ships time, unless otherwise stated.	135
Latitude and Longitude of activity	Record Latitude and Longitude making sure to include the EW/ NS and record to three decimal places where possible.	136
Type of Activity	Use one of the appropriate activity codes to describe the activity.	137
BAITFISHING INFORMATION		
Bait Species caught	Record bait species caught using 3 letter FAO codes. If unable to describe to species level use family group codes.	138
Bait Species purchased	Record Bait species purchased using 3 letter FAO Codes. If unable to describe to species level use family group codes.	140
Estimated Weight or quantity of bait caught or used	Estimated weight of bait used for each fishing activity.	141
SCHOOL INFORMATION		
Method of Detection of School	Use "Detection Codes" on how they best describe the way the fish were found.	142
Type of School Association	Use 'Association Codes" on how they best describe the fish associations. I.e. Free school, Raft , Log, Whale, etc.	143
INFORMATION ON CATCH PER SCHOOL FISHED		
Number of Crew Polling	Count number of crew carrying out polling of fish, once the polling has been well established. (Not at start or finish)	144
Time of Start of Spraying,	Record start time of sprayers.	145
Time of Chumming and Polling	Record Start time of Chumming and Polling.	146
Time of End of Spraying, Chumming and Polling	Record time they stop the spraying; Record time they stop Chumming and Polling.	147
Retained Catch by Species	Species codes of all catch retained by the vessel: include estimated weight of each species caught per set.	148
Discards by Species	Species code of all catches discarded by the vessel: include estimated weight or number of each species discarded.	149
Tag Recovery information	Record all details for any tag recovered in a set.	150
Species code	Record FAO Species Code for each fish that is measured in the order they are measured.	151
Length Measurement code	UF measurements are used for all tunas "Upper Jaw to Fork" in the tail (i.e. caudal fork)	152
Length of Species	Measure from tip of nose to the fork in the tail and rounding down to nearest centimetre (Tunas)	153

SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST Marine Reptiles, Marine Mammals, Sea Birds, Designated Shark Species		
GENERAL INFORMATION		
Type of Interaction	Indicate what Type Of Interaction, I.E. Caught On Line - Tangled In Net, Swimming Around Outside Of Net, Etc.	154
Date and Time of interaction	Record Ships Date and Time of Interaction	155
Latitude and Longitude of interaction	Record Position of the Interaction.	156

Species Code of Marine Reptile, Marine Mammal, or Seabird.	Use FAO codes for Species.	158
LANDED ON DECK		
Length of Species	Measure length in Centimetres.	159
Length Measurement code	Measure using the Measure Method determined for that Species.	160
Gender	Sex the Animal if possible.	161
Estimated Shark Fin Weight by species	Weigh each Species Shark Fins separately if shark has been fined by crew, if no scales estimate the weight.	162
Estimated Shark Carcass Weight by species	Weigh each Carcass of a finned shark, if no scales available or body is discarded, or if it is too large to handle; estimate the weight.	163
Condition when Landed on Deck	What is the Condition when caught use codes:	165
Condition when Released	What is the Condition when discarded use codes;	166
Tag Recovery information	Record as much as information as possible on any Tags recovered	167
Tag Release information	Record as much information as possible on any Tags placed on the species before being released.	168
INTERACTION WITH VESSEL OR GEAR ONLY		
Vessel's Activity during interaction	What was the vessel doing when the interaction took place i.e. setting, hauling, etc.	169
Condition Observed at start of interaction	Condition of species at the start of the interaction	170
Condition Observed at end of interaction	Condition of species at the end of the interaction	171
Description of interaction	Indicate interaction, with the vessel gear only - caught on line - tangled in net, etc	174
Number of Animals Sighted	How many animals are sighted during interaction	175
VESSELS & AIRCRAFT SIGHTINGS		
VESSELS & AIRCRAFT SIGHTINGS		
UTC. Date & Time of sighting	Record vessel sighting using UTC date and time from the GPS	176
Observers Vessel Latitude and Longitude position	Record your vessels position at time of sighting.	177
Where possible sighted vessel or aircraft name	Try to identify the name of the vessel sighted usually on the stern or on the bow	178
Where possible sighted vessel or aircraft call-sign	Try to identify all or part of the call sign painted on the vessel, usually on the bow and or the vessel superstructure	179
Flag of sighted vessel if possible	If possible, try to identify the flag State of the vessel, usually you can see the name of the flag State indicated on the stern.	180
Other Vessel Markings	Record any other visible and prominent markings	181
Type of Vessel (i.e. Purse-seine - Long line, etc.)	Indicated what type of vessel using codes	182
Compass bearing from observers' vessels to sighted vessel	What bearing is it from your vessel to the sighted vessel using compass degrees not directions use 90^0 not East	183
Estimated distance from observer vessel to sighted vessel	Check the sighting on the radar and use the distance indicated, if not available use your estimate	184

Activity of sighted vessel i.e. Fishing, Drifting, Steaming etc.	Describe whether fishing or not fishing using the codes.	185
Comments-.	Write any comments that will help to identify the vessel such as colour of vessel, did you take photos, etc.	186
OBSERVER TRIP MONITORING SUMMARY		
VESSEL TRIP SUMMARY		
Observer name & nationality:	Name and nationality of observer	187
Observer Trip number:	Trip number used on all the other forms	188
Observer Provider/Programme:	Programme that supplied the observer to the vessel	192
Name of Vessel:	Vessel name include all numbers in the name	1
Vessel Call sign:	IRCS or WIN number whichever is used	3
Vessel Gear Type:	Type of vessel	195
Coastal State License, when applicable	License of coastal state if applicable	196
Nationality of any boarding vessel * note this field is only to be used when a boarding is made by an inspection vessel	When at sea indicate if any patrol vessels made a boarding name and nationality of the vessel making the boarding	200
Did the vessel do any of the following: indicate YES or NO; for any YES response, please provide additional explanation and information) **Did the Vessel:**		
inaccurately record vessel positions on vessel log sheet for sets, hauling and catch; (Yes No)	Check vessel log sheets against your recorded position for sets and hauls and determine if they are inaccurate (note positions may vary slightly but should be in a very close range to your recorded positions.	201
inaccurately record retained 'Target Species' in the vessel logs; (Yes No)	Did the vessel record species incorrectly or inaccurately, often on Purse Seiners, small YFT and BET are thrown in with Skipjack	202
inaccurately record 'Target Species' discards; (Yes No)	Long liners often discard commercial species because they are shark or whale damaged or on Purses seiners because they are too small or are poor quality these are often not recorded at all or are under recorded (*Note that commercial tuna species discarded on a purse seine vessel can only be when it is unfit for human consumption*	203
inaccurately record retained by-catch species (Yes No)	Long liners and purse-seiners often do not record bycatch species they retain such as billfish, mahi mahi and other species.	204
inaccurately record by-catch species discards; (Yes No)	Long liners and purse seiners often do not record any discard species and if they do it is often inaccurate information.	205
record species inaccurately (Yes No)	Purse-seiners often record BET as YFT especially when they are small	206
interact with non-target species: (Yes No)	Did the vessels interact with non-target species, e.g. Species of Special Interest (SSI)	207
high grade the catch; (Yes No)	High grading is where smaller or less quality species are discarded to make way for better quality and larger species.	208
fail to comply with any Commission Conservation and Management Measure; (Yes No)	Did the vessel not comply with some of the measures in the WCPFC CMMs - i.e. set on FADS when there is a closure, etc.	209

fish in areas where it is not permitted to fish; (Yes No)	Did the vessel fish in closed areas such as within territorial seas or specific closures given by the Commission	210
fail to report vessel position to countries, where required, when entering and leaving an EEZ (crossing to or from an EEZ into or out of the High Seas (Yes No)	Vessels are required to indicate to every country when they enter and leave their Zones	211
transfer or tranship fish from, or to, another vessel (Yes No)	Did the vessel the observer is on transfer from or receive any tuna during the trip.	212
request that an event not be reported by the observer (Yes No)	Did the Captain ask the observer not to report certain activities occurring on the vessel?	213
Did the operator or any crew assault, obstruct, resist, delay, refuse boarding to or intimidate or interfere with observers in the performance of their duties (Yes No)	Self-Explanatory	214
operators fail to provide the observer, while on board the vessel, at no expense to the observer or the observer's government, with food, accommodation and medical facilities of a reasonable standard equivalent to those normally available and medical facilities of a reasonable standard equivalent to those normally available to an officer on board the vessel. (Yes No)	Self-Explanatory	215
use a fishing method other than the method the vessel was designed or licensed; (Yes No)	Did the vessel fish by a method to which it was not designed i.e. purse seiner setting long lines etc.	217
lose any fishing gear; (Yes No)	Did the vessel lose any gear during its fishing campaign Describe type of gear and how it was lost.	218
abandon any gear; (Yes No)	Did the vessel leave gear behind when they go to port (FADS not included)	219
fail to report any abandoned gear; (Yes No)	Did the vessel report the loss or abandonment of gear to the authorities of the country where the vessel fishes in the case of the high seas they should report to the flag state of the vessel.	220
dispose of any metals, plastics, old fishing gear or chemicals. (Yes No)	Did their crew discard over the side any materials as indicated	221
discharge any oil; (Yes No)	Pump or lose fuel oil into the ocean	222
fail to monitor international safety frequencies; (Yes No)	Vessel did not keep the radios on the bridge tuned to 2180 etc. when not in use.	223
fail to stow fishing gear when entering areas where they were not authorized to fish; (Yes No)	When entering a non-licensed area, the vessel must stow all gear. These include territorial seas going to port or in countries where the vessel isn't licensed to fish.	224

Data fields that should be provided by observer providers to the Commission Secretariat with the Observer Trip Monitoring Summary, to support the pre notification process;		
Observer Start date of Trip	Date observer starts their trip.	189
Observer End date of Trip	Date observer completes their trip.	190
Status of Observer Debriefing	Debriefed Not Debriefed Pre-Debriefed	191
FAD DATA FIELDS		
Name of Observer	Full name of observer -first name first - last name last	14
Vessel Name	Full name of vessel including numbers	1
Vessel IRCS	Vessel Radio Call-sign (If none WIN identification)	3
Observer Trip Number	Trip number allocated by observer provider	188
Page Number	Number of pages used	225
Date FAD Sighted	Record date of FAD sighting	226
Time FAD Sighted	Record ships time FAD sighted	227
Latitude of FAD	Record position of FAD using Latitude	228
Longitude of FAD	Record position of FAD using Longitude	229
FAD Anchored Or Drifting (circle "Y" for Anchored "N" for Drifting)	Indicate whether the floating object is an anchored floating object or not.	230
Estimated Size of FAD (Simple Diagram to be drawn by observer indicating dimensions.)	Record the width, breadth, depth of the main body of the object as found or deployed.	231
Comments	Observer record FAD information not covered by the MSDF fields	231
Depth of Netting and other materials hanging from Floating Object (FAD)	Observers are to try and estimate depth and type of materials hanging below floating objects.	232
FAD Markings or numbers	Observers are to record any FAD markings such as Numbers – IRCS- Names - or FAD Tag numbers	233
Describe the “Floating Object” when first found by the vessel	Observers are to describe the condition, attachments if any, and nature of the floating object when first found	234
Describe any changes or additions to the ‘Floating Object when vessel departs	Observers are to describe the condition, and any additional work or electronics attached to refresh the FAD.	235

SPC Standard Codes for WCPFC Regional Observer Programmes

The following tables present codes used by the WCPFC observer data manager, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). These codes are recommended for use by observers when collecting data under the WCPFC Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDF). While the MSDF themselves are mandatory under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) requirements, the associated coding systems are not mandatory but are provided as guidance to assist programmes in recording information in a consistent and efficient manner.

Using the same or compatible codes across different observer programmes is extremely important. When programmes apply common coding systems, it greatly simplifies the collection, entry, and management of observer data within databases. Standardised codes reduce the risk of errors during data entry, make it easier to integrate data from multiple national and sub-regional programmes, and support more efficient analysis and reporting. Consistent coding also allows data providers such as SPC to compile and validate information from across the region in a uniform manner.

These coding tables are regularly updated and expanded as new fishing practices, gear types, species, and operational activities are identified and incorporated into the data collection system. The ongoing development of these codes aims to ensure that, wherever possible, observer-recorded activities can be captured using recognised codes rather than free text. This approach improves data quality and ensures that information collected by observers across the region can be more easily processed, compared, and analysed.

Observer programmes are therefore strongly encouraged to use these codes where possible when collecting data under the MSDF framework, as doing so supports regional harmonisation and greatly improves the efficiency and usability of observer data systems.

Codes encouraged to be used with the collection of the Minimum Standard Data Fields		
FISH AGGREGATING DEVICE (FAD)CODES		
FLOATING OBJECT **as Found or as Left** **1 -** Man made object (Drifting FAD) **2 -** Man made object (non-FAD) **3 -** Tree or log (natural, free floating) **4 -** Tree or logs (converted into FAD) **5 -** Debris (flotsam bunched together) **6 -** Dead Animal (specify, i.e. whale, horse, etc.) **7 -** Anchored Raft Fad or Payou **8 -** Anchored Tree or Logs **9 -** Other (please specify) **10 -** Man made object (Drifting FAD)-changed	**MATERIALS FAD IS MADE FROM** **Codes for FAD Main Materials** **1 -** Logs / trees / branches **2 -** Timber / planks / pallets / spools **3 -** PVC or plastic tubing **4 -** Plastic drums **5 -** Plastic sheeting **6 -** Metal drums (i.e. 44gal) **7 -** Philippines design drum FAD **8 -** Bamboo / Cane **9 -** Floats / Corks **10 -** Unknown (Describe) **11b -** Jelly Design FAD	**FAD Attachments** **11 -** Chain /Cable rings /Weights **12 -** Cord/Rope **12b -** Natural fibre cord/rope **13 -** Netting hanging underneath FADS **13b -** netting tied up in sausages **14 -** Bair containers **15 -** Sacking /Bagging **16 -** Coconut fronds/Tree branches **17 -** Other materials (Describe)
ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATED WITH FAD **Codes for Electronics Associated with FAD** **1 -** Radio buoy (with identification) **2 -** Radio buoy -unidentified **3 -** GPS buoy (with identification) **4 -** GPS buoy - unidentified **5 -** Sounder buoy (with identification) **6 -** Sounder buoy - unidentified **7 -** Light buoy **8 -** Other (describe (record all available identification characters) **20 -** Unknown (describe in comments)	**ORIGIN OF FAD** **Code for Origin of FAD** **1 -** Your Vessel deployed this trip **2 -** Your Vessel deployed previous trip **3 -** Other Vessels – owners' consent **4 -** Other Vessels – no owner's consent **5 -** Other Vessel Consent unknown **6 -** Drifting and found by your Vessel **7 -** Deployed by FAD auxiliary Vessel **8 -** Origin Unknown **9 -** Other Origin (please specify)	**FAD ACTIVITY** **Code for FAD Activity** **1 -** Setting on FAD **2 -** Deploying FAD **3 -** Servicing FAD **4 -** Retrieving FADS **5 -** Vessel drifting beside FAD attracting fish away from FAD before carrying out a Set **6 -** Vessel setting close to FAD specify estimated distance in comments **7 -** Vessel using lights of boat or light boat to attract fish from FAD during night **8 -** Other (Describe) **9 -** Investigate floating object using sonar/sounder

SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

TTX	**All Turtles**
TTL	Loggerhead Turtle
DKK	Leatherback Turtle
TUG	Green Turtle
LKV	Olive Ridley Turtle
TTH	Hawksbill Turtle
FBT	Flatback turtle

DLP	**All Dolphins**
DBO	Bottlenose Dolphin
DCO	(Short beaked) Common Dolphin
DRR	Risso's Dolphin
DSI	(Indo Pacific) Spinner Dolphin
DPN	(Pan-tropical) Spotted Dolphin
DST	Striped Dolphin
RTK	Rough-toothed Dolphin
FRD	Frasers Dolphin

SHK	**All Sharks**
RHN	Whale Shark
OCS	Oceanic White-tip Shark
FAL	Silky Shark

RMV	**Mobulid rays**
RMB	Giant Manta
RMA	Reef Manta
RMT	Chilean Devilray
RMM	Giant Devilray
RMO	Bentfin Devilray
RMK	Shortfin Devilray

ODN	**Toothed whales**
SPW	Sperm whale
KIW	Killer whale
FAW	False killer whale
SHW	Short-finned pilot whale
MEW	Melon headed whale
KPW	Pygmy killer whale
PYW	Pygmy sperm whale
DWW	Dwarf sperm whale
BBW	Blainville's beaked whale
BCW	Cuvier's beaked whale
MEP	Beaked whales

MYS	**Baleen whales**
BLW	Blue whale
FIW	Fin whale
SIW	Sei whale
BRW	Bryde's whale
MIW	Minke whale
HUW	Humpback whale

BIZ	**All birds**
DKN	Black-footed Albatross
DIZ	Laysan Albatross
WAX	Wandering Albatross
BBA	Black Browed Albatross
ALZ	Albatrosses
SZV	Boobies and Gannets
PRX	Petrels and Shearwaters
LRD	Gulls, Terns, Skuas

SSI INTERACTION CODES

Primary Gear Interaction Codes

IEN	Entangled (in gear)
IJO	Jumped out (net closed
ICR	Crew released from net
IBR	Broke through net
IHE	Hooked internally (mouth)
IDJ	Hooked in jaw (circle hook)
IHD	Hooked in jaw (circle hook)
IHU	Hooked unknown
IRN	Roped, pulled through net
OTH	Other, please specify

Vessel and Non-primary Gear Interaction Codes

IBV	Interaction, beside vessel
ION	Interaction, outside net
ICF	Interaction, crew feeding
IWF	Interaction, with FADs, but not set on
IDW	Interaction, dead in water
ICV	Interaction, collision with vessel
ICP	Interaction, collision with propeller
ICT	Interaction, collision with tori line
FRB	Interaction, feeding on bait during set
IFO	Interaction, feeding on discarded offal
IRE	Interaction, resting on vessel, floats or FADs (birds
OTH	Interaction- other, please specify

SSI Sightings Codes

SDS	At distance Swimming
SBR	Breaching
STP	Tail slapping or playing
SMG	Motionless in group
SDW	Dead in Water
SBO	Bird overhead
OTH	Other, please specify

Purse Seine Codes

Purse seine Activity and Helicopter Codes

1 - Set
2 - Searching
3 - Transit
4 - No Fishing Breakdown
5 - No Fishing Bad Weather
6 - In Port (Please specify)
7 - Net Cleaning Set
8 - Investigate "Free School"
9 - Investigate "Floating Object/s"
10R - Retrieve - Raft FAD or Payao
10D - Deploy - Raft FAD or Payao
11 - No fishing – Drifting at day's end
12 - No fishing – Drifting with a floating
13 - No fishing – Drifting other Reason
14 -Drifting with Fish aggregating lights
15R - Retrieve Radio beacon/GPS buoy, etc.
15D - Deploy Radio beacon/GPS buoy, etc.
16 - Transhipping or bunkering
17 - Service FAD or floating object
H1 - *Helicopter takes off to search*
H2 - *Helicopter returns from search*

How Tuna is Detected Code

1 - Seen from vessel
2 - Seen from helicopter
3 - Marked with beacon
4 - Bird radar
5 - Sonar / depth sounder
6 - Info. from other vessel
7 - Anchored FAD / payao (recorded)

School Association Code (Tuna only)

1 - Unassociated (Free School)
2 - Feeding on Baitfish (Free School)

Associated Schools
3 - Drifting log, debris or dead animal
4 - Drifting raft, FAD or payao
5 - Anchored raft, FAD or payao
6 - Live whale
7 - Live whale shark.
8 - Other (please specify)
9 - No tuna associated

Species Caught and Released Condition Codes

AO - Alive but unable to describe condition.
A1 - Alive and Healthy
A2 - Alive and injured or distressed
A3 - Alive but unlikely to Survive
D - Dead
U - Unknown

Gear and PS Vessel Interaction Codes

IEN - Entangled (in gear)
IJO - Jumped out (over net)
ICR - Crew released from net
I**CV** - Collision with vessel
IBR - -Broke through net
IBV - Interaction, beside vessel
ION - Interaction, outside net
IWF - Interaction - with FADs, but not set on
IDW - Interaction - dead in water
OTH - Other, please specify

Fate Retained Codes

Fate Codes used on Purse Seine, Long Line and all other Gear types

RWW - Whole weight
RHG - Headed & Gutted (Billfish only)
RGG - Gilled & Gutted (kept for sale)
RGT - Gilled Gutted and Tailed for sale
RGO - Gutted only
RPT - Partially Retained (e.g. fillet loins etc.)
RCC - Retained for Crew Consumption
ROR - Retained for Other Reasons (specify)
RFR – Retained Trunk and fins (shark only)
RSD - Retained but Shark Damaged

Fate Discarded Codes

DFR	Discarded trunk - fins retained (shark only)
DTS	To small (record only for tuna)
DGD	Gear Damage (record only for tuna)
DVF	Vessel fully loaded (no more storage)
DUS	Unwanted species
DSD	Shark Damage
DWD	Whale Damage
DPQ	Poor quality
DPA	SSI species released alive
DPD	SSI species released dead
DPU	SSI species released in unknown condition
DOR	Other reason for discard.
ESC	Tuna escaped from net.

Sex:

M - male,
F - female,
I - indeterminate - you inspected the gonads but could not decide what sex it is)
U = unknown - the gonads were not checked)

Long Line Codes

Gear Interaction Code

Gear interaction Codes to be used for interactions of SSIs with the primary gear or vessel but not landed on deck.

IEN - Entangled
IHE - Hooked Externally
IHI - Hooked Internally (mouth)
IHJ - Hooked in jaw (circle hook)
IHD- Hooked deeply – throat or stomach
IHU - Hooked unknown
IFB – Feeding on bait during set

Gear Usage Tables

All - Used ALL the time in fishing
TRA - Used only in TRANSIT
OIF - Used OFTEN in fishing
SIF - Used SOMETIMES in fishing
RAR - RARELY used
BRO - BROKEN but used normally
NOL - NO LONGER ever used
OTH - please specify

Species Caught and Released Condition Codes

AO -Alive but unable to describe condition.
A1 - Alive and Healthy
A2 - Alive and injured or distressed
A3 - Alive but unlikely to Survive
D - Dead
U - Unknown

Fate Retained Codes

RGG- Retain - gilled and gutted
RGT- Retain - gilled gutted and tailed
RWW- Retain - whole
RPT- Retain - partial (e.g. fillet, loin, trunk)
RFR- Retain - both fins and trunk (sharks**)**
RHG- Retain- headed and gutted (billfish)
RSD- Retain- but shark damaged
RCC- Retain - for crew consumption
RGO- Retain- gutted only**.**
ROR- Retain - other reason (specify)

Sex:

M - male,
F - female,
I - indeterminate - you inspected the gonads but could not decide what sex it is
U = unknown - the gonads were not checked)

Length code describes how the fish or animal was measured

TL - Total Length
UF - Upper Jaw to Fork
LF - Lower Jaw to Fork
PF - Pectoral Fin to fork in Tail
TW - Total Width (tips of Wings (Rays)
CL- Carapace Length (Turtles)
WL - Wing Length tips of wing to wrist (Birds)
BL- Beak Length
NM -Not Measured

Fate Discarded Codes

DFR	Discarded trunk - fins retained (shark only)
DTS	To small (record only for tuna)
DGD	Gear Damage (record only for tuna)
DVF	Vessel fully loaded (no more storage)
DUS	Unwanted species
DDL	Too Difficult to Land
DSO	Struck off
DCF	Cut Free
DSD	Shark Damage
DWD	Whale Damage
DDH	De-hooked
DPQ	Poor quality
DPA	SSI species released alive
DPD	SSI species released dead
DPU	SSI species released in unknown condition
DOR	Other reason for discard.
ESC	Tuna escaped from net

Common LL Caught FAO Species Codes

YFT – Yellowfin Tuna
BET – Bigeye Tuna
ALB – Albacore Tuna
SKJ – Skipjack Tuna
BFT – Northern Bluefin Tuna
SBT Southern Bluefin Tuna
MLS - Striped Marlin
BUM – Blue Marlin
BLM – Black Marlin
SWO - Swordfish
SFA – Sailfish
SSP – Short-billed Spearfish
WAH - Wahoo
DOL – Dolphin Fish (Mahi Mahi)
LAG – Moonfish (Opah)
OIL - Oilfish
LEC - Escolar
RRU – Rainbow Runners
TST – Sickle Pomfret
BRZ – Pomfrets and Breams
LNC – Short-Nose Lancetfish
LNZ – Long Nose Lancetfish

Common LL Caught FAO Shark Codes

FAL – Silky Shark
LMA – Long Finned Mako Shark
SMA – Short Finned Mako Shark
OCS – Oceanic Whitetip Shark
PTH – Pelagic Thresher Shark
BTH – Big eye Thresher Shark
THR – Thresher Sharks – (General)
BSH - Blue Shark
POR – Porbeagle
SPL - Scalloped Hammerhead
SPK - Great Hammerhead
SPZ - Smooth Hammerhead
SPN – Hammerhead Sharks (General)
SHK – All Sharks (General)

*** Note -** Avoid using "General Codes." If the species can be identified, the specific species code should always be used**.**

General Forms

Vessel and Aircraft Type Codes

1 - Single Purse Seine
2 - Longline
3 - Pole And Line
4 - Mothership
5 - Troll
6 - Net Boat
7 – Bunker
8- Search, Anchor or Light Boat
9 - Fish Carrier
10 - Trawler
21 - Light Aircraft
22 - Helicopter
31 - Other - Please Specify:

Action Codes

Fishing includes any fishing related activity not otherwise covered here
FI - Fishing
PF - Possible Fishing
NF - Not Fishing
DF - Dumping Fish

SSI Sightings Codes

SDS	At distance Swimming
SBR	Breaching
STP	Tail slapping or playing
SMG	Motionless in group
SDW	Dead in Water
SBO	Bird overhead
OTH	Other, please specify

Action Codes

Receiving
TR - Transhipping
SR - Set Sharing
BR - Bunkering
OR – Other (Specify)

Giving
TG – Transhipping fish (from the hold in one vessel to the hold in another vessel)
SG – Set Sharing from one vessels net to the other vessel hold
BG - Bunkering
OG – Other (Specify)

Removal of WCPFC Regional Observer Programme Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDF) Following WCPFC22 Decisions

At the 22nd Regular Annual Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC22) in December 2025, the Commission agreed to remove certain data fields from the Minimum Standard Data Fields (MSDF). As a result, the MSDF table has been updated to reflect the revised set of required fields.

The table now shows the current data fields that all Regional Observer Programmes (ROPs) must include in their observer data collection formats. These revisions ensure programmes remain aligned with Commission decisions and that collected data focuses on essential information for monitoring, compliance, and scientific purposes within the WCPFC framework.

Programmes should review the updated MSDF table and ensure that their observer forms, manuals, and data systems reflect these changes so that required fields continue to be collected consistently.

The Commission noted that much of the information from the removed fields is already available through the RFV and other existing sources. Their removal helps avoid duplication and streamline observer data collection.

The Intersessional Working Group on the Regional Observer Programme (IWG-ROP) continues to review the MSDF and may consider further additions or removals where needed, particularly to support new or revised CMM requirements.

The fields listed below are no longer part of the required MSDF. However, programmes may still choose to retain and collect this information within their own data collection formats if they wish to retain it for different purposes.

Field	#	Field	#
GENERAL VESSEL AND TRIP INFORMATION		**LONGLINE GEAR ATTRIBUTES**	
Flag State Registration Number	2	Mainline Length	50
Vessel Owner/Company	4	Mainline Hauler	54
VESSEL ATTRIBUTES		Branch Line Hauler	55
Vessel fish hold capacity	30	**PURSE SEINE & POLE & LINE DAILY ACTIVITIES**	
Vessel Length (specify unit)	32	Vessel Fish-hold Capacity	132
Vessel Tonnage (specify unit)	33	Numbers of Schools Sighted per day	118/138
Vessel Engine Power	34	**OBSERVER TRIP MONITORING SUMMARY**	
VESSEL ELECTRONICS		Vessel Certificate of Registration	197
Radar	35	WCPFC Authorisation	199
GPS	37		
Track Plotter	38		
Weather Facsimile	39		
Sea Surface Temperature (SST)	40		
Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)	47		

END