

7th MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

La Havana, Cuba, 7 to 12 October 2019

SC7-Doc14

VMS Summary & Scientific Committee Access to VMS Data

Secretariat

1. Background

The purpose of the Commission VMS as set out in Paragraph 3 of [CMM 06-2018 \(Commission VMS\)](#) provides that “the purpose of the Commission VMS is to continuously monitor the movements and activity of fishing vessels that are on the Commission Record of Vessels and are authorised by Members or CNCPs to fish for fisheries resources in the SPRFMO Convention Area in a cost-effective manner in order to, inter alia, support the implementation of SPRFMO CMMs.”

According to Paragraph 7 of CMM 06-2018 (Commission VMS), “Data collected by the Commission VMS shall be securely stored by the Secretariat indefinitely and shall be used by the Members and CNCPs, in accordance with the provisions of this CMM, to achieve compliance with CMMs. VMS data may also be used by the Scientific Committee for analysis to support specific scientific advice requested by the Commission for sound fisheries management decision-making in the Convention Area.”.

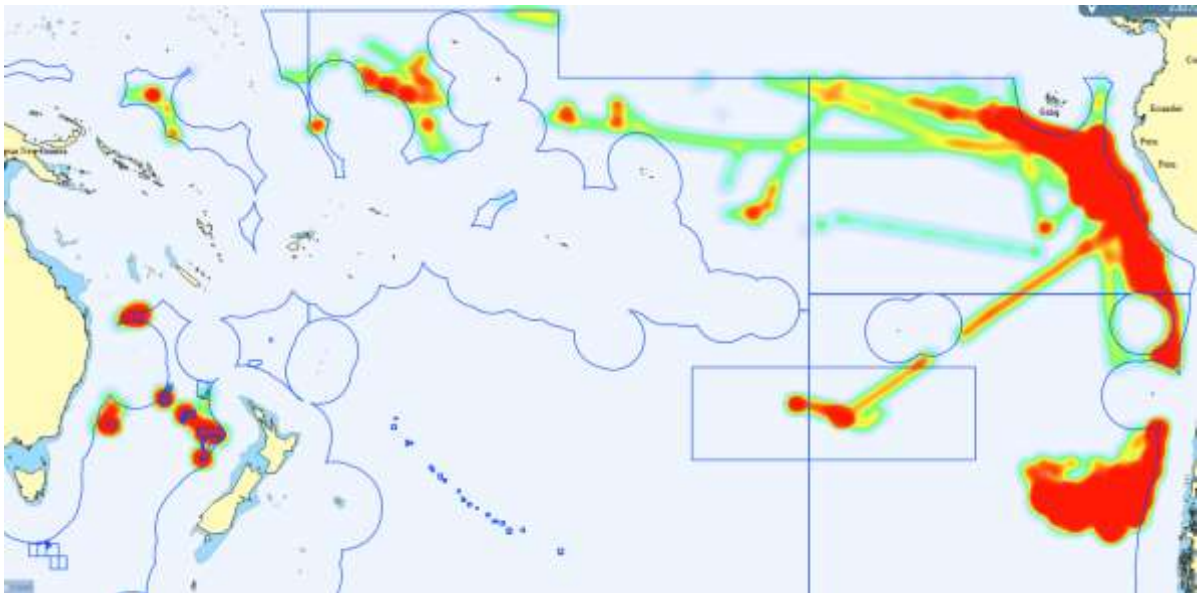


Figure 1 Heat map of SPRFMO authorised vessels for the months of May 2019 & June 2019

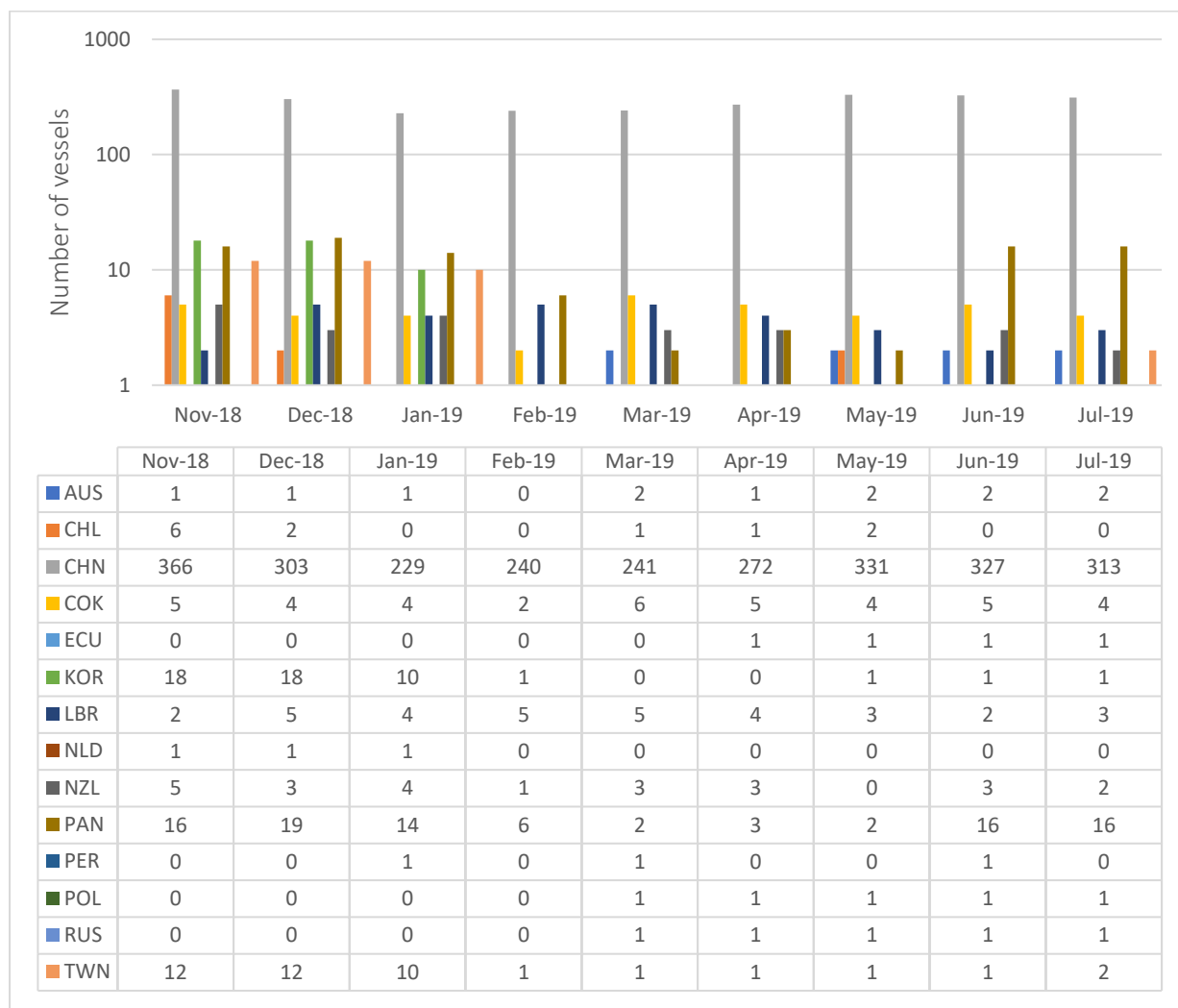
Paragraph 8 of CMM 06-2018 requires “... vessels flying its flag to report to the Commission VMS automatically either:

- (a) to the Secretariat via their Member or CNCP’s FMC; or
- (b) simultaneously to both the Secretariat and its FMC.”



Currently, there are 1 139 vessels that are authorised to carry out fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area in accordance with [CMM 05-2019 \(Record of Vessels\)](#). In any given month, between 250 to 430 vessels are in the SPRFMO Area and report their positional data to the Commission VMS system as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Vessels reporting to the Commission VMS shown by Flag code¹



1.1. Data Formats and Availability

The position reports from the vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area contain the following information:

Data Element	Data Type	Status
Vessel Name	Alpha-numeric	-
Flag	3 Letter code	-
Date	Position date in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)	-
Time	Position time in UTC	-
Class	Data created automatically or entered manually	G – Auto U – Manual

¹ Flag Codes are as per Annex 2 of CMM 05-2019 (Record of Vessels)



Latitude	Position latitude in decimal degrees (5 decimal places)	Sent by unit
Longitude	Position longitude in decimal degrees (5 decimal places)	Sent by unit
Heading	The direction of the vessel in degrees	Sent by unit
Speed	Vessel speed in knots	Sent by unit
Average heading	The average direction of the vessel in degrees	Calculated
Average speed	The average speed of the vessel in knots	Calculated

The frequency of reporting of the vessel position is in accordance with Paragraph 7 of Annex 1 of CMM 06-2018 (Commission VMS). Generally, vessels are reporting automatically at a frequency of once every 4 hours. However, vessels belonging to Australia and New Zealand are reporting on a half-hourly basis as required under paragraph 39 a) ii of [CMM 03-2018 \(Bottom Fishing\)](#)

In the event the Commission VMS experiences non-reception of four consecutive positions from a vessel (automatic positions), then the missing positions are generally requested from the relevant member and uploaded manually into the VMS system.

The Commission VMS system was officially commissioned/accepted on Friday the 8th of June 2018 and by 19th April 2019 all of the required Members and CNCPs were setup in the system.

2. VMS Data for Scientific Purposes

Article 8 of the [SPRFMO Convention](#) states that “the Commission develops rules for the collection, verification, reporting, storing and dissemination of data” and Article 9 states that “All subsidiary bodies shall report, advise and make recommendations to the Commission”.

Paragraph 7 of CMM 06-2018 foresees that “VMS data may also be used by the Scientific Committee for analysis to support specific scientific advice requested by the Commission”.

2.1. How the SC should access VMS Data?

Paragraph 22 of CMM 06-2018 elaborates on the use and release of VMS Data not requiring the consent of the Member or CNCP (planning and/or conducting active surveillance operations or supporting search and rescue activities).

- The SC is invited to assess whether the use of VMS data for scientific purposes needs the consent of the Member or CNCP.

2.2. How to make operational the procedure to request VMS data

Acting on the SC suggestion recorded in paragraph 246 of [SPRFMO SC6 Report](#), “to streamline SC access to VMS data provided appropriate objectives are specified”, the Secretariat would like the SC to consider the following:

Annex 2 of CMM 06-2018 elaborates on the Security provisions referring to VMS data (VMS data treated as confidential information, periods to retain or delete data, secured internet protocols, Point of Contact for the purposes of any communication, etc).

- The SC is invited to assess if the current provisions on security and confidentiality may need further security levels when using VMS data for scientific purposes.



There is no specific Annex for the request and release of VMS data for Scientific purposes in CMM 06-2018.

- The SC is invited to assess if the process for requesting of VMS data should be in line with the [protocol for SPRFMO submission of SC papers](#).
- The SC is also invited to assess if the current process for release of VMS data either according to paragraphs 2 to 4 or paragraphs 5 to 9 of Annex 5 of CMM 06-2018 will be adequate for scientific purposes.

There is no prescribed template available for the submission of a scientific request in order to request access to SPRFMO VMS data.

- The SC is invited to propose the type(s) of information that should be used by an SC Member to present a request (clear objectives based on Commission requested advice, fishery to which the advice will be relevant, reasons of using the VMS data etc).

3. Review of CMM 06-2018

According to paragraph 30 of CMM 06-2018, *“The Commission shall conduct a review of the implementation of the Commission VMS at its annual meeting in 2020 and shall consider its efficiency and effectiveness and consider further improvements to the system as required.”*

- Finally, to assist the Commission in their review of the Commission VMS, the SC is invited to provide comments/suggestions on ways to improve the current system considering VMS data may also be used by the SC to support specific scientific advice requested by the Commission.