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New Zealand SPRFMO Observer Implementation Report for 2013

Ministry for Primary Industries



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New Zealand SPRFMO Observer Implementation Report for 2013

Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand

This report constitutes New Zealand's Annual Observer Implementation Report for the year 2013 (January – December), pursuant to paragraph 2(d) of the SPRFMO Standards for the collection, reporting, verification and exchange of data.

New Zealand has had an observer programme in place since 1986, operating as a unit within the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). It delivers coverage days for a number of clients, who are provided with some or all or the information collected.

These clients are: The Ministry for Primary Industries (Science, Field Operations, Fisheries Management groups), The Department of Conservation through the Conservation Services Levy, The National History Unit of the Museum of New Zealand, the New Zealand Fishing Industry, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the Conversion Factors Working Group, which is a joint MPI and industry working group.

The independence and credibility of the data collected by the NZ observer programme is subjected to critical review by our clients, who have established feedback mechanisms to inform and correct any deficiencies in our processes.

When the negotiations to establish a SPRFMO adopted data standard and observer coverage levels in 2007, New Zealand was in a position to meet the requirements through this established observer programme.

1 Observer Training

MPI recruitment requires all our permanent observers to successfully complete a three week training course before they are accepted into the programme. The course outline is as follows. Sessions preceded with a number are unit standards registered on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework:

- Observer Programme overview, Trip Planning.
- Catch effort logbooks (CELB)
- Catch effort logbook exercises
- Overview of the Observer manual
- 12306 Identify common parts, fittings and equipment on a vessel
- 12310 Prevent, extinguish and limit the spread of fire on a vessel
- 497 Protect health & safety in the workplace
- 6213 Use safe working practices in the seafood industry
- 12309 Demonstrate knowledge of abandon ship procedures and demonstrate sea survival skills
- 15679 Demonstrate a basic knowledge of commercial fishing methods
- Volumetric measurement
- Density factors
- Time Sampling
- Catch Assessment
- Mixed tows

• 19847 – Describe the reduction of marine mammal and turtle incidental capture during commercial fishing, including assessment.

- 5332 Maintain personal hygiene and use hygienic work practices working with seafood
- 19877 Demonstrate knowledge of protection of the marine environment during seafood vessel operations
- Department of Conservation Marine mammals and seabirds, mitigation devices
- Non-fish bycatch forms
- Benthic form
- Personal clothing and stores
- Communications / Key vessel personnel / Emergency Evacuation codes
- The psychology of deployment Observer health and safety issues
- Code of conduct / complaint procedure
- QMS overview
- Scales
- Net bursts / discards / Schedule 6 releases
- Product states
- 19846 Describe the reduction of seabird incidental capture during commercial fishing including assessment
- 23030 Use basic knife skills as a fisheries observer
- 23027 Demonstrate knowledge of information displays aboard seafood harvesting vessels
- The Compliance Business and Observer Compliance Contribution
- 20168 Work on a commercial fishing vessel
- Briefing / Debriefing / General paperwork
- Performance Assessment System
- Conversion factors / practical exercise
- Fish ID book
- Fish ID practical
- Otoliths/Staging
- Biological sampling forms practical
- Biological Manual
- First Aid kits
- Tablets and at-sea data entry
- Observer Powers
- Compliance Investigation Services Role, Use of Observer data, Profiling, Forensics.
- Employment Agreement
- MPI Science use of observer data
- Examination

Successful recruits are accepted into MPI Observer Services and then deployed with an observer trainer for one to two trips of an average duration of 30 day per trip.

2 Programme Design and Coverage

The MPI observer programme made provision in its annual plan to meet the observer coverage levels set out in SPRFMO CMM2.03 (Conservation and Management Measure for the Management of Bottom Fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area):

i. for vessels using trawl gear in the Convention Area, ensure 100 percent observer

coverage for vessels flying their flag for the duration of the trip.

ii. for each other bottom fishing gear type, ensure that there is at least a 10 percent level of observer coverage each fishing year.

New Zealand conducted no pelagic fishing for *Trachurus* species in the SPRFMO Convention Area during 2013. New Zealand flagged vessels did fish in bottom fisheries in the SPRFMO Convention Area using either bottom trawling or bottom lining fishing methods.

Table 1. Monthly fishing effort by New Zealand vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Area during 2013.

Month and Year	Number of bottom trawl vessels	Vessel days in bottom trawl	Number of bottom line vessels	Vessel days in bottom line
January 2013	0	0	3	25
February 2013	0	0	1	8
March 2013	0	0	0	0
April 2013	0	0	1	6
May 2013	1	2	1	4
June 2013	4	85	0	0
July 2013	6	75	0	0
August 2013	2	15	0	0
September 2013	1	5	0	0
October 2013	1	7	2	13
November 2013	0	0	1	6
December 2013	0	0	2	18

Table 2. Observer coverage achieved in the New Zealand bottom trawl¹ and bottom line fisheries in the SPRFMO Area during 2013.

Month and Year	Number of bottom trawl vessels covered	Observed vessel days in bottom trawl	Number of bottom line vessels covered	Observed vessel days in bottom line
January 2013	0	0	0	0
February 2013	0	0	0	0
March 2013	0	0	0	0
April 2013	0	0	0	0
May 2013	2	9	0	0
June 2013	4	118	0	0
July 2013	4	110	0	0
August 2013	3	44	0	0
September 2013	1	28	0	0
October 2013	1	31	1	13
November 2013	1	2	1	12
December 2013	0	0	0	0

The costs of observer coverage were fully recovered directly from industry through the direct charging of vessel operators.

New Zealand's implementation of the SPRFMO interim measures, including the move on rule, is described in detail in its bottom fishery impact assessment². In summary, the move on

rule is applied in open 'moderately trawled' areas, where vessels that encounter evidence of a VME when bottom trawling are required to move on 5 nautical miles from the position that hauling of the gear commences, and cannot return to that area for the duration of the trip.

Evidence of a VME is determined through the applications of the VME Evidence Process set out in the fishers high seas fishing permit and reproduced in Appendix 1. This process is completed by the observer, and a completed copy of the form given to the master in a timely manner. If a move on is triggered it is the master's responsibility to notify MPI and to ensure that the vessel does not fish within 5 nautical miles of this position for the remainder of the trip.

3 Data collection and Reporting

Observers on vessels fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area were tasked to:

- Complete the VME Evidence process for all bottom trawl tows in areas where the move on rule applied;
- Complete MPI benthic material forms for all tows in all areas;
- Determine and record catch effort and catch information on each fishing tow in all areas independent of vessel reporting; and
- Obtain biological data and samples on target and other species. This includes measuring and sexing fish and collecting otoliths.

The observer reporting forms are detailed in Appendix 1.

Observers deployed on SPRFMO trips were all experienced observers and were briefed prior to each trip on the benthos identification as it related to the VME evidence process.

Observer data for 2013 for are reported to the SPRFMO interim Secretariat as required by the data standards.

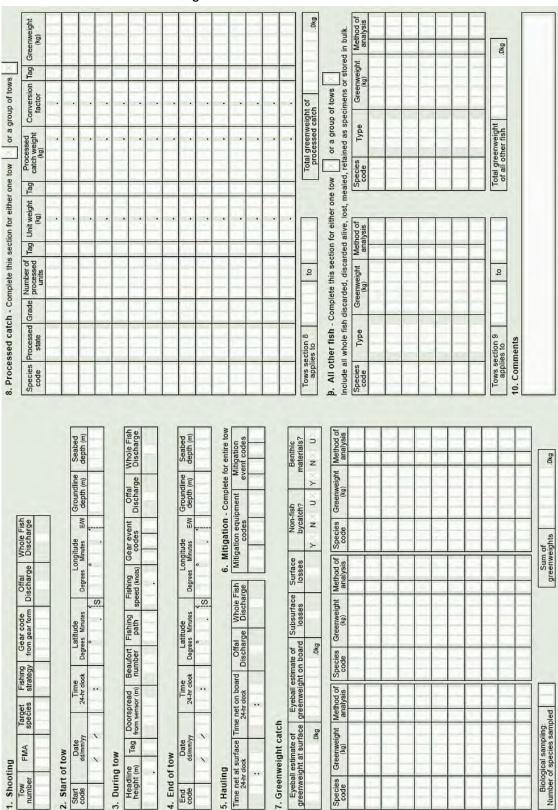
3.1 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Implementing the SPRFMO observer requirements did not present insurmountable problems. Most of the prerequisite processes were already in place when the data standards and coverage levels were agreed.

One or two observers are required on each bottom trawl vessel to achieve one hundred percent observer coverage of all bottom trawling activities. The number is reviewed on a case by case basis, and includes consideration of the working hours of the observers, and the fishing capacity of each vessel. In all of the 2013 bottom trawl trips only one observer was requested per trip. The onus was placed on the vessel operators via the high seas permitting process to keep their fishing effort within the hours achievable with the level of coverage they have requested. Fishing effort on a few occasions exceeded the daily hours safely manageable by a solo observer. In total, 90% of all hauls were viewed by an Observer.

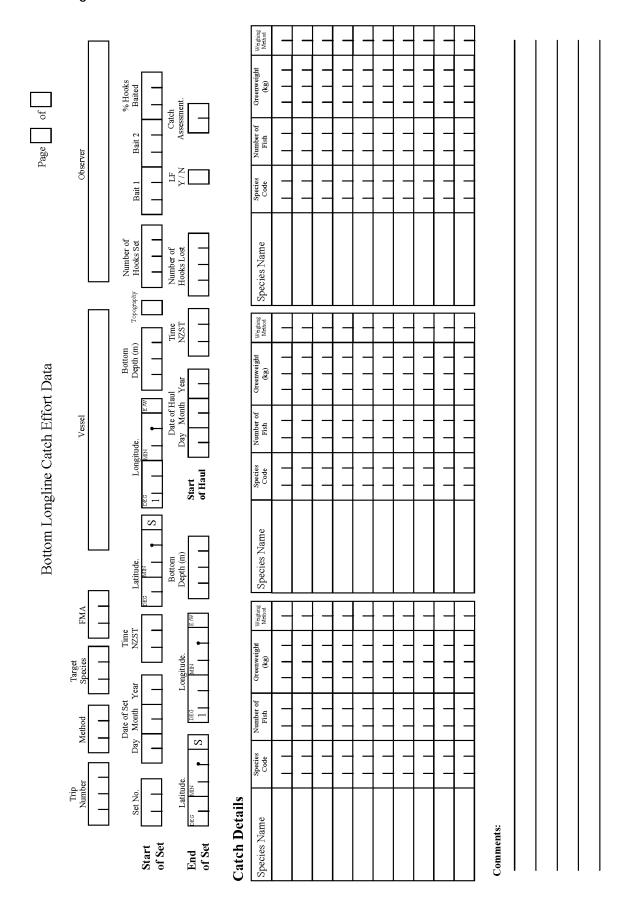
Appendix 1. Observer data collection forms used to monitor New Zealand high seas fisheries

Observer Trawl catch Effort Logbook



Observer Benthic Materials Form

Bottom Longline Catch Effort Data

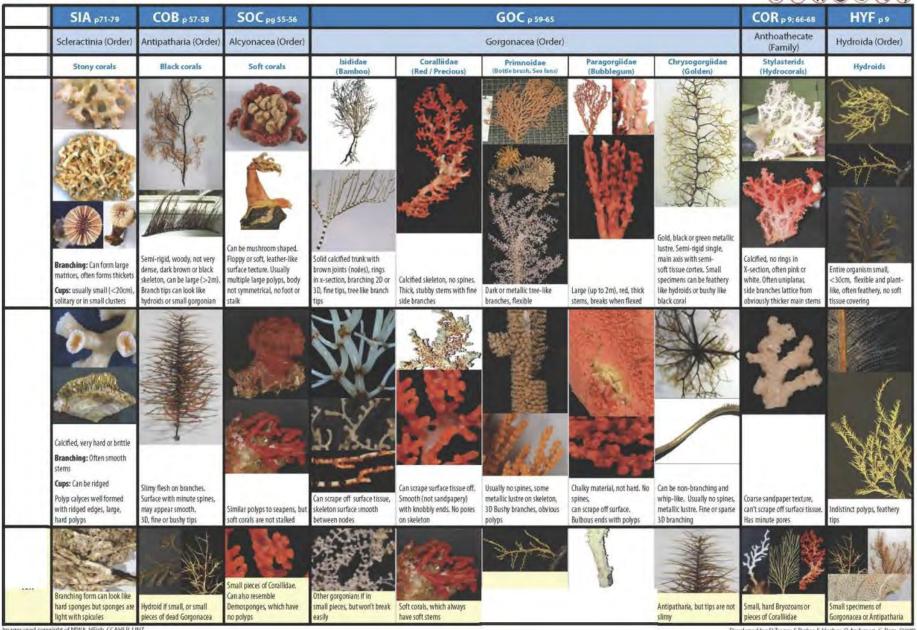


VME Identification Form and associated VME Species Identification Guide implemented on New Zealand high seas bottom trawlers

Date damm/yy 24-hr clock Degrees Minutes Degrees Minutes E/W 3. Instructions Assess the total weights of all organisms whether dead or alive in each of the relevant taxonomic groups and record in Section (If the Observed Weight of a taxonomic group is greater than (not equal to) the Threshold Weight, write the VME Indicator Store for that group in the Score Column. If a taxonomic group is present, but the Observed Weight is not greater than the Threshold Weight, tick in the "Tick" columns. Sum the scores and count the ticks. Record these totals at the bottom of the columns. Add the Sum of scores to the Counticks and record it as the Total VME Indicator Score. If the Total VME Indicator Score is 3 or greater, the area is considered to have Evidence of a Vulnerable Marine Ecosyst If the Total VME Indicator Score is 3 or greater, the area is considered to have Evidence of a Vulnerable Marine Ecosyst If the Total VME Indicator Score is 3 or greater, the area is considered to have Evidence of a Vulnerable Marine Ecosyst If the Total VME Indicator Score is 3 or greater, the area is considered to have Evidence of a Vulnerable Marine Ecosyst If the Total VME Indicator Score is 3 or greater, the area is considered to have Evidence of a Vulnerable Marine Ecosyst If the Total VME Indicator Method of Weight (kg) VME Weight Indicator Weight Score If Threshold Weight Score Score If Threshold Score Score If Threshold Score If Threshold Score If Threshold Score If Indicator Score Indicator	Trip Tow number number		Obs	server/s	5					Name of ve	ssel mas	ter		
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Note these are MFish codes

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Developed by: D Tracey, S Parker, E Mackay, O Anderson, C. Ram, (2008)

