



**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE  
THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**Rarotonga, Cook Islands  
9 – 17 August 2017**

---

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION  
PART 1: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS**

---

**WCPFC-SC13-AR/CNM-32**

**Rev 2 (7 November 2017)**

**LIBERIA**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE WESTERN CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES  
COMMISSION (WCPFC)**

**PART I: INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND  
STATISTICS**

**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

**7 July 2017**  
**(Revised 18 October 2017)**

Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by 30 April 2016.	No.
Liberian flagged vessels are engaged in transshipment activities <u>only</u> in the WCPFC Convention Area.	

## **1. Abstract/Summary**

The Republic of Liberia is situated within the east central Atlantic region of the Gulf of Guinea. With an Atlantic coastline of about 570km and a continental shelf averaging 34km in width, the marine fishing grounds of Liberia cover 186 322.2km<sup>2</sup> within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).<sup>1</sup> Liberia's Inshore Exclusion Zone (IEZ) was recently reduced from six (6) to three (3) nautical miles by Executive Order No. 84, and is reserved for artisanal and semi-industrial fishing activities.<sup>2</sup> The fishing area extends from the shrimp-rich Shebro grounds bordering Sierra Leone in the west, to the Cavalla River Basin bordering Côte d'Ivoire in the east, and the tuna pelagic fishing grounds extending out into the Atlantic Ocean.

Liberia's continental shelf area has considerable marine fish species. The main oceanic pelagic resources are tuna and tuna-like species such as yellowfin tuna, bonito and marlin. Demersal fish species are also found in marine waters and are harvested on a commercial basis.<sup>3</sup> Crustaceans such as shrimp, crab and lobster are less abundant, but are of much higher value than finfish species, and are targeted for Liberia's export market.<sup>4</sup>

Liberia's fisheries sector contributes approximately 12% of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 3% of the overall GDP. Revenue to the Government from licensing fees, vessel registration fees, inspection and observer fees, import/export charges, and fines totaled approximately \$400,000 in 2011 and increased precipitously to nearly \$6 million by mid-2013, due to penalties collected from the prosecutions of foreign vessels illegally fishing in domestic waters.<sup>5</sup>

Liberia's fisheries has three (3) main subcomponents:

---

<sup>1</sup> See FAO Fishery Country Profile (Republic of Liberia): <http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/FCP/en/LBR/profile.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order No. 84 Pertaining to the Management of Liberia's Fishery Resources (Apr. 22, 2017): <http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/scan00.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Liberia Fisheries, Bureau of National Fisheries - Marine Division: [www.liberiafisheries.net/aboutus/marine](http://www.liberiafisheries.net/aboutus/marine)

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy: Republic of Liberia (2014).

1. Marine: comprises of industrial and artisanal activities;
2. Inland fisheries: mainly artisanal; and
3. Aquaculture: through subsistence fish farming.

Artisanal fisheries are a key sector in Liberia, providing food and livelihood to coastal communities. There are roughly 3,300 canoes and more than 11,000 fishers operating actively from 114 fish landing sites along the coastline. The artisanal fleet comprises the indigenous Kru canoe, operated by Kru fishermen using paddles or sail.<sup>6</sup> The marine industrial fishery is divided into a trawl fishery for shrimp and demersal finfish, which provides frozen whole fish, and shrimp for the local market and an offshore large pelagic fishery. The inland fisheries are based on rivers, lakes and wetlands such as swamps and coastal lagoons. The aquaculture sub-sector, which includes mariculture, is underdeveloped and largely subsistence, with about 300 fish farmers engaged in some form of fish culture generally on a part-time basis. About 1,704 ponds (113.9 hectares) of various sizes are distributed in about 160 rural communities of which 1,125 (73.3 hectares) are in use for farming tilapia and catfish.<sup>7</sup>

The office responsible for fishing activities is the Bureau of National Fisheries (BNF), which is under the supervision of a Coordinator (assigned by the Minister of Agriculture). Major functions of the BNF include: registration of artisanal fishing canoes, inspection of fishing canoes and fishing gears, granting of fishing licenses, record of catch data, and deployment of fisheries enumerators at landing sites. In 2010, the BNF finalized the new Fisheries Regulations to ensure that the sectors are well managed and regulated. In April 2017, by Executive Order No. 84, complete supervisory and fiscal authority was granted to the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA) over the BNF and Liberia's fishery resources, pending enactment of the National Fisheries Act.

The LMA was established in 1948 with the launch of its Registry during the post-World War II period.<sup>8</sup> It is an autonomous agency, which has the responsibility of administering the Liberian Maritime Program. In order to effectively operate Liberia's maritime program overseas, the LMA contracted the services of wholly U.S. owned and operated Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR, LLC or Liberian Registry), as its agent to aid the Government in the operation of the maritime operations. The Registry is the second largest in the world, with approximately 4,170 vessels, aggregating more than 150 million gross tons, which represents 12% of the world's ocean going fleet<sup>9</sup> and provides the day-to-day management for Liberia's ship and corporate registry under the provisions of Liberia Maritime Law and Regulations. Liberia Maritime Law and Regulations include requirements for vessel registration, crew licensing, certification of vessels for safety, marine investigation and inspection, and promulgated by the office of the Commissioner of the LMA.

The Liberian Registry does not register fishing vessels. However, it does register container ships, bulk and non-bulk carriers, chemical/oil tankers, refrigerated cargo vessels, reefers, mobile offshore drilling units, etc.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> The Liberia Maritime Authority: <http://maritimeliberia.com/?about/history.html>

<sup>9</sup> The Liberian Registry: <http://www.liscr.com/about-liberian-registry>

## 2. Tabular Annual (2016) Fisheries Information

Of the twenty-six (26) vessels authorized to operate in the WCPFC Convention Area in 2016, only three (3) actively engaged in transshipment operations during the January-December 2016 period.

Transshipments by Liberian flagged vessels in 2016:

### Annex II (1)

Species	Total Quantity Transshipped (KG)	Transsh. in WCP-CA High Seas	Transsh. in IATTC-WCP-CA Overlap High Seas	Transsh. in IATTC High Seas	Transsh. in Kiribati EEZ	Transsh. in Tuvalu EEZ	Transsh. in PNG EEZ	Product Form	Gear
BET	8,246,330	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Longline
YFT	2,461,536	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Longline
SWO	711,155	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Longline
MLS	104,237	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Longline
BUM	113,175	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Frozen	Longline
WHM	128	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Longline
BLM	479	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Frozen	Longline
ALB	1,152,555	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Longline
SKJ	19,626	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Frozen	Longline
OTH	171,153	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Frozen	Longline
TOTAL	12,980,374	5,837,056	1,204,075	2,362,917	3,255,901	70,810	249,615		

### Annex (II) (2)

Number of Transshipments by Liberian Flagged Vessels

Total No. of Transshipments	WCP-CA (High Seas)	Tuvalu (High Seas)	IATTC-WCP-CA Overlap (High Seas)	IATTC (High Seas)	Kiribati EEZ	PNG EEZ
193	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### **3. Background**

Liberia is a Cooperating Non-member (CNM) of the WCPFC and there are presently twenty-five (25) Liberian flagged vessels registered on the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels.

### **4. Coastal State Reporting**

N/A

### **5. Socio-economic Factors**

Liberia's Maritime Program has positioned the country as one whose Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is unduly supported by the entire maritime sector. Its world renowned Registry ensures that its Flag is flown by some of the world's largest fleets and its use of seaports as the gateway to the national economy makes it a Port State in the West Africa region.

Moreover, with the reduction of Liberia's IEZ from six to three nautical miles (*see* Executive Order No. 84), industrial and semi-industrial fishing is expected to be revitalized.

### **6. Disposal of Catch**

N/A

### **7. Onshore Developments**

On December 9, 2015, Liberia and the European Union (EU) signed a 5-year Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) and associated protocol, which set out fishing opportunities for EU vessels. The SFPA further expands the EU's network of tuna fisheries agreements in West Africa.

The related protocol offers opportunities to 28 purse seiners and 6 surface longline vessels to fish for tuna and tuna-like species in waters under Liberia's jurisdiction, based on a reference tonnage of 6,500 tons. In return, the EU will pay Liberia an average annual compensation of 650 000 Euros, out of which 50% is earmarked to support the fisheries policy of Liberia, including but not limited to reinforcing its fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance capacity.<sup>10</sup>

### **8. Future Prospect of Fishery**

The future of Liberia's fishery looks promising. The Government and people of Liberia look forward to a sustainable managed fisheries sector, capable of:

---

<sup>10</sup> Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Liberia (Dec. 12, 2015): [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22015A1212(01)&from=EN)

- providing increased profitable fisheries employment opportunities while offering an enabling environment for upgrading technical skills for enhanced value added fisheries vocations;
- engaging participatory fisheries management institutions based on community and stakeholder structures for the creation of opportunities for socio-economic development;
- contributing to GDP, national food and nutritional security and improving living conditions, by upgrading and adopting appropriate, modern and efficient fisheries capabilities for increased fish production while reducing losses through illegal fishing; and
- deriving net benefits from a vibrant fish trade supported by, value addition systems and fisheries infrastructure for fish landing and export, as well as efficient fishing input supply and distribution systems.<sup>11</sup>

## **9. Status of Tuna Fishery Data Collection Systems**

Liberian flagged vessels operating in the WCPFC Area and foreign vessels operating in Liberian waters are required install satellite-based vessel monitoring systems (VMS), which are capable of providing automatic location communicator (ALC) static unique identifier; current geographical position (latitude and longitude) of the vessel; and date and time. Moreover, Liberian flagged vessels operating in the WCPFC Area are equipped with VMS tablets, which are capable of transmitting data and are tamper resistant. The vessels are required to submit transshipment declarations to the WCPFC and the FMC upon completion of transshipment activities within a specified period.

## **10. Research Activities Covering Target and Non-Target Species**

Liberia has not conducted any research activities covering target and non-target species.

---

<sup>11</sup> See Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy & Strategy: Republic of Liberia (2014).