



IUU Risk Intelligence

Putting Compliance First

GLOBAL EVALUATION OF FISHERIES MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE IN 84 COUNTRIES

COLOMBIA - COUNTRY REPORT

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IUU RISK INTELLIGENCE

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SUMMARY

*This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for **Colombia** is one of 84 such country evaluations that covers nations landing 92% of world's fish catch. Using a wide range of interviews and in-country consultations with both military and civilian agencies, the report exemplifies the best attempt by the author(s) at evaluation of MCS compliance using 12 questions derived from international fisheries laws. The twelve questions are divided into two evaluation fields, (MCS Infrastructure and Inspections). Complete details of the methods and results of this global evaluation would be published shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website.*

Over a five-year period, this global assessment has been subjected to several cross-checks from both regional and global MCS experts familiar with compliance aspects in the country concerned. Uncertainty in assigning each score is depicted explicitly through score range. However, the author(s) are aware that gaps may remain for some aspects. The lead author remains open at any time to comments, and revisions will be made upon submission of evidence where necessary. Throughout the report, extreme precaution has been taken to maintain confidentiality of individuals who were willing to share information but expressed an inclination to remain anonymous out of concern for their job security, and information from such sources was cited as 'anonymous' throughout the report.

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COLOMBIA – COUNTRY REPORT



FAO landings (2013): 41,744 tonnes

Fisheries contribution to GDP (2014): 0.2%

Law of the Sea (Ratification / Accession): Signed on 10 December 1982; Not Ratified yet

Coastline: 3208 km

RFMO Membership: IATTC

Patrolling Agencies: Colombian Navy, INCODER, National Police

Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Narcotics Trafficking
2.	Illegal Migration
3.	Illegal Fuel Trade

SECTION 1: MCS INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Does the country have adequate surveillance infrastructure (patrol aircraft, sea based patrol vessels and coastal patrols) to effectively patrol fisheries resources within its EEZ?

Score: 7.5

Score Range: 7-8

Yes, sufficient for effective patrolling in most jurisdictions. There is a persistent illegal fishing by foreign fishing vessels from Ecuador (in mainland EEZ), Honduras and Nicaragua in the San Andres archipelago. Most of the surveillance infrastructure is not geared towards inspections in the fisheries sector (Saavedra-Díaz 2012). Colombian Navy has two ARC-7 de Agosto ocean patrol vessels (OPV-80) for offshore surveillance operations. The navy has three CN-235 MPA Persuader (maritime patrol aircraft) and several light wing aircrafts; in addition, there is one squadron with Bell 212, EMB-110P1 (C-95) aircraft (IISS 2013).

Colombian navy is moderately well equipped to control and prevent incursions of foreign fishing vessels within its maritime domain; this is largely a collateral benefit due to use of coastal radars and increased preparedness to confront narcotics trafficking. Colombian Navy units in the Caribbean are connected through satellite and simultaneous video conference capability with all nine naval units deployed in Cays and Islands of the archipelago (Anon, *pers. comm.*, 2017).

2. Does the country have adequate trained officers to conduct MCS operations?

Score: 4

Score Range: 3-5

Available information suggests shortage of manpower in Colombian Navy and INCODER for fisheries related MCS duties (EU 2011; Saavedra-Díaz 2012).

3. Does the country have adequate management plans to monitor their fishing vessels on the high seas?

Score: 5

Score Range: 4-5

Existing information suggests that the country does not possess such capabilities, with the exception of VMS to monitor tuna vessels operating in

IATTC and ICCAT jurisdictions. Article 25, 3 of Decree No. 2256, 1991 requires a fishing permit while fishing on the high seas.

Colombian vessels on the high seas are only monitored as per the requirements of RFMO regulations. Industrial tuna fleets have tracking devices and reports on their practices are submitted to tuna RFMOs each year (Anon, *pers. comm.*, 2017).

The port of Barranquillas serves as a base for foreign tuna fleet that unload catches at local canneries, but their landings are poorly supervised by INCODER for controls on illegal fish due to shortage of manpower (EU 2011). Currently Colombia does not have a NPOA on IUU Fishing with guidelines on how fish landings will be monitored at different landing centers; which is further complicated by supervision of multiple agencies in the fisheries sector. A couple of Colombian flagged purse seiners had a poor record of compliance with IATTC resolutions in the recent past (NOAA 2015; IATTC 2013).

4. What proportion of fishing vessels above are equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) to monitor their movements on a continuous basis?

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5

Fishing vessels in the industrial sector (mostly shrimp, tuna) that are more than 24 m in overall length are required to have a vessel monitoring system (VMS), and this coverage also extends to foreign fishing vessels that operate under fisheries agreements with Colombian companies (EU 2011). However, vast majority of semi-industrial fishing fleets that commit illegal fishing violations are not equipped with VMS tracking devices.

5. What percentage of fishing vessels (>20 m OAL) are monitored through onboard observers at sea (for major commercial fish stocks)?

Score: 1.5

Score Range: 1-2

Available information suggests that there is limited observer scheme in the tuna sector focused on 'dolphin safe' fishing operation controls (requirement under IATTC regulations); however, this scheme is not aimed at monitoring vessel positions or the volume of tuna caught by these vessels (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2017).

Current IATTC observer coverage is inadequate (IATTC 2014b).

SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

6. How often fishing vessels are inspected at sea (Identification by sight and boarding for inspections)?

Score: 7.5

Score Range: 7-8

At-sea inspections are reported in artisanal and industrial fisheries (Beltran 2007). See Q.1 for some information on this aspect.

Drug trafficking, organized crime, timber trafficking, illegal fuel trade, illegal migration, illegal mining, and illegal fishing are some of the complex crimes that are tackled each day in Colombian waters. There are adequate patrol vessels for offshore waters, but coastal bays remain prone to illegal fishing and other unlawful practices. Fishing vessels are also more likely to be inspected at sea, as they are often involved in trafficking of narcotics. Coastal waters in bays and mangroves are more vulnerable to illegal fishing practices due to the complex network of inter-connected waterways where boats, illegal gear and catches can be stowed. Coastal waters also show more illegal fishing offences compared to offshore waters. With one of the best surveillance assets in Latin America, offshore enforcement is better year on year and such violations could be fully detected in future. Experience in tackling drug trafficking have improved interception capabilities and reinforced naval efforts through good results in recent years (Anon, *pers. comm.*, 2017).

7. How often fishing vessels are scrutinized through aerial patrols?

Score: 7.5

Score Range: 7-8

Such data is not available for Colombia's fishing fleet operating in the EEZ. Aerial patrols destined to combat drug trafficking also provide valuable information on presence of Colombian and foreign flagged fishing vessels in the EEZ. However, exact numbers of vessels detected are confidential and not open to public scrutiny. Tracking of fishing and other marine vessel traffic is also optimized using radars, aerial patrols and AIS technologies primarily to tackle drug trafficking (Anon, *pers. comm.*, 2017).

8. How often are fishing vessels inspected at landing centers and docks for foreign and domestic vessels (Dockside monitoring)?

Score: 4

Score Range: 2-4

There are several seaports on the Atlantic (*Barranquilla, Cartagena and Santa Marta*) and Pacific coasts (*Buenaventura and Tumaco*), where domestic and foreign fishing vessels make port calls. INCODER has limited resources for monitoring landings at these major ports. Landing report is mandatory for all industrial fishing vessels calling at Colombian ports. However, due to shortage of fisheries inspectors very few fishing vessels or landing declarations are checked each year. Some of the glitches identified with respect to control of illegal fishing include illicit landings of lobsters and conch in the Caribbean; unauthorized tuna trading in the Pacific Ocean; easy availability and unlawful use of small-meshed fishing nets; poor implementation of closed seasons and minimum landing size for fish (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2017).

Foreign fishing vessels that intend to land their catches in Colombian ports must provide at least 48 hours of prior notice. Ley 13 de 1990 (*art. 30*), and the Decreto reglamentario 2256 de 1991 (*art. 41*) state that landings should be done in Colombian ports. Shortage of INCODER staff also means that landings are not adequately supervised, and most often, the only mode of supervision is landing report submitted by domestic and foreign industrial fishing vessels calling at its ports (EU 2011). According to Pew (2009) there were 16 reported visits by three IUU fishing vessels to Colombian ports (Cartagena - 14 visits; Buenaventura - 4 visits) between 2006 and 2009.

9. Are there adequate plans to monitor catches in coastal areas through coastal patrols (beach patrols, small-scale fishing gear and catches inspections) on a regular basis?

Score: 4

Score Range: 3-5

Inspections are rare and not effective in coastal fisheries. Illegal fishing gear is very easily available and so cheap that most artisanal fishers use them. Coastal landing beaches do not receive the same attention for fisheries inspections in comparison to registered fishing docks. Coastal waters including bays, cays and MPAs remain vulnerable to illegal fishing practices and there is very little monitoring in remote landing beaches due to lack of urban connectivity and fewer land-based patrol bases. Small-scale and semi-industrial landing posts receive random inspections due to perceived threats from organized crime and drug trafficking (Anon, *pers. comm.*, 2017).

See Jiménez and Saavedra-Díaz (2019); Satizábal (2018); Tiller *et al.*, (2017); Wielgus (2010); Alayon (2011); Rueda and Defeo (2003); UNEP (2006a,b); Rueda *et al.*, (2011); Saavedra-Díaz (2012) documents for more information.

10. Are all the catches that are caught in this jurisdiction at sea accounted for (i.e., unreported Trans-shipments at sea)?

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5

A few transshipments are conducted at ports and checked before exports for the vessels operating in IATTC waters. See Q.8 for more information.

11. Are vessels required to undergo inspection of equipment and fishing gear for every fishing trip?

Score: 1.5

Score Range: 1-4

Occasional inspections of fishing gear are reported for industrial fishing vessels calling at major ports (EU 2011). Use of illegal fishing gear is widespread in coastal fisheries (Ibarra *et al.*, 2014; FAO 2015; Saavedra-Díaz *et al.*, 2015; Saavedra-Díaz *et al.*, 2016).

12. Has the country taken adequate measures to revise and implement national fisheries laws to curtail illegal fishing practices; and does it comply with national and international laws signed?

Score: 5

Score Range: 5-7

Law No. 13 of 15 January 1990 is the main national legislation for fisheries management in Colombian waters. The law specified above does not define illegal fishing but only prohibits certain fisheries violations and fishing gear without any deterrence on illegal fishing activities. In 2005, Colombia adopted NPOA on IUU Fishing to fight and eliminate illegal fishing. Recently the Government adopted Bill 117 of 18 September 2015 defining illegal fishing in the context of maritime security and amending procedures for bringing offenders in front of judge, with increased sanctions for breach of fisheries regulations. Colombia is not a party to the UN Port State Measures Agreement, UN Fish Stocks Agreement and the FAO Compliance Agreement.

Recently CCAMLR has written to CITES reporting that Colombia (CITES member) has failed to participate in CCAMLR catch documentation scheme regulating trade of toothfish (Traffic 2016).



See EU (2011); Velez *et al.*, (2012); Rueda *et al.*, (2011); AUNAP (2013); FAO (2015); NOAA (2015); Saavedra-Díaz *et al.*, (2016) documents for more information.

Flag of Convenience	No
Vessels on the RFMO - IUU vessel list	No

RFMO	Year of the assessment	Compliant	Partially Compliant	Not Compliant	Source
IATTC	2013		Yes		IATTC (2014b)

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Note:

Bibliography and other notes relevant to this country report including methods, results and discussion for the global evaluation of 84 countries would be released shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website (<https://iuriskintelligence.com/>). (The author can be contacted at pramod.raju@gmail.com to provide any feedback).

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