



IUU Risk Intelligence

Putting Compliance First

GLOBAL EVALUATION OF FISHERIES MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE IN 84 COUNTRIES

OMAN - COUNTRY REPORT

GANAPATHIRAJU PRAMOD

IUU RISK INTELLIGENCE

Policy Report - Volume 1 Number 1



SUMMARY

This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for Oman 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 to comments, and revisions will be made upon submission of documentary 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.

Suggested citation:

Pramod, G. (2020) Oman – Country Report, 8 pages, In: Policing the Open Seas: Global Assessment of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance in 84 countries, IUU Risk Intelligence - Policy Report No. 1, Canada, 840 pages.

© **Pramod Ganapathiraju**

All rights are reserved.

<https://iuriskintelligence.com/>

OMAN – COUNTRY REPORT



FAO landings (2013): 206,169 tonnes

Fisheries contribution to GDP (2015): 0.7%

Law of the Sea (Ratification): 17th August 1989

Coastline: 3165 km

RFMO Membership: IOTC

Patrolling Agencies: Royal Oman Navy, Oman Marine Police



Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Drug trafficking
2.	Arms smuggling
3.	Illegal fishing

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: 6.5

Score Range: 5-7

Yes, to a moderate extent for modest patrolling in territorial waters but offshore capacity needs improvement (Jane 2011; Jane 2015; Military Balance 2020; Anon 2011a; Anon 2012; Aljabri 2012). The presence of radar assists in detecting incursions along the Gulf of Oman (FAO 2009b). The Royal Oman Navy has two 75-meters in length Al-Ofouq-class patrol vessels (*Shinas* (Z21) & *Al-Seeb* (Z20) for maritime security operations (Rahmat 2015). Oman navy received the third (*RNOV Sadh*) and fourth (*RNOV Khassab*) Al-Ofouq-class patrol vessels in 2016 year (ST-Marine 2016). Maritime patrol capability was enhanced by acquisition of two new C-295 maritime patrol aircraft (Military Balance 2016). In December 2019, Royal Oman Police Coast Guard (ROPCG) received the first ARES 85 Hercules Fast Patrol Craft from Turkey (ARES 2019).

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5

Data deficient. Available information suggests modest presence of Royal Oman Marine Police and Directorate General of Fisheries Resources inspectors to conduct MCS operations (Al-Mazrouai 2017; World Bank 2015; IOTC 2012; Morgan 2006). In 2002, there were 46 fisheries officers to conduct fisheries enforcement in industrial and small-scale fisheries (Morgan 2006). No information is available on compliance or enforcement competence of these authorities in the marine fisheries sector.

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

Score: 2.5

Score Range: 2-4

Existing information suggests that the country does not possess such capabilities. Oman is signatory to the FAO Compliance agreement. Only one Oman flagged vessel was licensed to operate in the IOTC region in 2017 (IOTC

2018). There were 51 fishing vessels registered under the Omani flag in 2009 (MOTC 2010).

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

Score: 1

Score Range: 1-2

Oman has a vessel monitoring system for fishing vessels since 2000. All coastal fishing vessels (14-≤24m) in overall length and vessels operating on the high seas are required to have satellite based vessel-monitoring device (IOTC 2012). In the past, zonal limits for industrial fishing vessels were also enforced using VMS signals (Alhabsi 2012). At present, only industrial tuna fleet has VMS coverage. In 2018, no trawlers were licensed, and only lone longline vessel was licensed in the industrial tuna fleet. Since, 99.7% of tuna catches were landed by artisanal fleet, VMS coverage is currently low (IOTC 2018). FAO is currently implementing a project for installing VMS transponders on semi-industrial and artisanal fishing fleet (IOTC 2018).

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

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0

Available information suggests that observer scheme is not implemented in Oman's tuna sector (IOTC 2019b).

SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 4-7

Such data is not available for Oman. Morgan (2006) document suggests that routine inspections are undertaken at landing sites and fishing ports. However, at sea boarding and inspections data is not reported for Oman's fishing industry. Anderson (2012) report suggests moderate capability for offshore patrols and capacity for fisheries monitoring is low-key (World Bank 2015).

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5

Frequency of aerial patrols data is not available for Oman's fisheries. Limited aerial patrols are reported in FAO (1999) report. Oman lacks adequate number of maritime patrol aircraft for effective maritime surveillance (Aljabri 2012; Anderson 2012). Maritime patrol capability was enhanced by recent acquisition of two new C-295 maritime patrol aircraft (Military Balance 2016). Oman has "1 sqn with C295MPA; SC.7 3M Skyvan" aircraft for maritime patrol duties (Military Balance 2020).

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

Score: 4.5

Score Range: 3-5

Two ports in Oman are authorized to receive shipments of fish from vessels operating in Oman's EEZ and beyond; however, current manpower capacity is not commensurate with number of vessels calling at its ports (IOTC 2012; Aljabri 2012). Fish landed at small-scale landing centres are also smuggled into neighbouring countries via land border (Anon 2011b). Supervision at small-scale landing sites is also inadequate along many coastal provinces (World Bank 2015; Bose *et al.*, 2017; Bose *et al.*, 2020)

PSMA Status: FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (Acceptance on 1 August 2013).

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

Score: 5.5

Score Range: 4-7

Yes, to a significant extent (World Bank 2015). Small boats ranged from (5-9 meters in length) have a range of 6 nm while traditional vessels like dhows (10-32 metres length) had a range beyond 7 nautical miles. In 2017, fleet comprised of 23,232 fiber-glass artisanal fishing boats, 681 dhows, 144 coastal vessels, and 1 industrial long-line vessel (Al-Mazrouai 2017; MAF 2017; IOTC 2018).

Up to 500 fishing violations are reported each month in coastal fisheries “The violations of fishing laws have doubled in Oman in recent years with an average of over 500 cases being registered every month. According to the Fisheries Control and Licensing Department, 4,600 violations were registered in the first nine months of 2018 and 793 expatriates arrested. This is against a total of 2,857 cases of violations in 2017 and 1,931 in 2016 under the Marine Fishing Law and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources. Scores of illegal boats and fishing tools were also seized.” (Kutty 2018).

Use of illegal fishing gear and fishing in prohibited areas is reported along many sections of the coast (Al-Oufi *et al.*, 2000; Al-Subhi *et al.*, 2013; Anon 2013; Mehanna *et al.*, 2012; FAO 2009b; Belwal *et al.*, 2015; Bose *et al.*, 2017). Nearly 850 tonnes of Omani lobsters were illegally exported to neighbouring countries in the year 2002 (mostly to Dubai), which was three times the officially reported landing of lobsters in Oman during that year (Morgan 2006). The lobster fisheries continue to have inadequate supervision in small-scale landing sites (Bose *et al.*, 2020).

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

Score: 4.5

Score Range: 2-5

Transshipments at sea are prohibited and none are reported to Indian Ocean Tuna Commission; if transshipments are necessary at sea, they require prior authorization from national fishing authority (IOTC 2012; IOTC 2018). However, it appears that at present the system relies heavily on VMS to detect illegal transshipments without any direct visual cross-verification of such activities at sea (Anon 2012b; OFDC 2011). No foreign tuna vessels were authorized to operate in Oman EEZ in 2018 year (IOTC 2019b). FY 2018, at-sea and port transshipment reports were not provided to IOTC, so scale of compliance is hard to evaluate (IOTC 2019b).

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

Score: 4.5

Score Range: 3-5

Widespread use of illegal gears is reported in small-scale fisheries (World Bank 2015). Confiscations of monofilament gillnets is reported in Oman’s small-scale fisheries; Government agencies also conduct raids on fishing equipment shops. In 2011 year, 600 illegal monofilament nets were seized by fisheries inspectors. Random inspections are also required for industrial vessels under national

fisheries laws (Al-Oufi *et al.*, 2000; Mustapha and Alhabsi 2011; OFDC 2011; Mehanna *et al.*, 2012b; Bose *et al.*, 2017). Fisheries ministry's Fish Control Team and the Oman Coast Guard Police conduct occasional missions to seize illegal fishing gear at artisanal landing sites (Anon 2017; Anon 2018).

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: 5.5

Score Range: 4-7

Law Royal Decree No. 59 of 1993 is the main national legislation for fisheries management in Oman waters. Oman has developed a NPOA on IUU Fishing to fight and eliminate illegal fishing (Al-Mazrouai 2017). Oman ratified all three major international fisheries laws including the FAO Compliance Agreement on 1 July 2008, UN Fish Stocks Agreement on 14 May 2008 and the more recent UN Port State Measures Agreement on 1 August 2013.

See Sheppard *et al.*, (2010); Mustapha and Alhabsi (2011); Anderson (2012); Aljabri (2012); Al-Subhi *et al.*, (2013); Burt (2014); Neubauer (2014); Belwal *et al.*, (2015); World Bank (2015) documents for more information.

Flag of Convenience	No	Source: ITF (2015)
Vessels on the RFMO - IUU vessel list	No	

RFMO	Year of the assessment	Compliant	Partially Compliant	Not Compliant	Source
IOTC	2018			Yes	IOTC (2019a)

Last Updated: 29 January 2020



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).

© **Pramod Ganapathiraju**

All rights are reserved.

<https://iuriskintelligence.com/>

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the author.



Connect with us @



<https://twitter.com/iurisk>

@ **LinkedIn**

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4928027>

Website & Report design (<http://vjdesign.com.au>)