



# IUU Risk Intelligence

Putting Compliance First

## GLOBAL EVALUATION OF FISHERIES MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE IN 84 COUNTRIES

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### ARGENTINA - COUNTRY REPORT

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IUU RISK INTELLIGENCE

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## SUMMARY

*This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for Argentina 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:

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## ARGENTINA – COUNTRY REPORT



**FAO landings (2013):** 857,800 tonnes

**Fisheries contribution to GDP (2012):** 1%

**Law of the Sea (Ratification):** 1<sup>st</sup> December 1995

**Coastline:** 4989 km

**RFMO Membership:** CCAMLR

**Patrolling Agencies:** Argentina Navy, Argentina Coast Guard



Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Illegal fishing
2.	Illegal cross-border incursions
3.	Organised crime

## 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

Score Range: 5-7

Argentina has adequate MCS infrastructure to check both domestic and foreign fishing fleets operating within its EEZ (Jenne and Olivera 2019). Argentina Coast Guard has 7 offshore patrol vessels, 1 coastal patrol craft and 58 patrol boats (Military Balance 2020). Argentina also has relatively good offshore presence to prevent illegal fishing of squids along its 200 nm EEZ boundary compared to its neighbours in the South Atlantic. In December 2019, Argentina Navy received first of its four Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) “A.R.A.Bouchard” that it ordered from France (*Bouchard the ex-French Navy “L'Adroit” vessel was received after 10 months of modernization and upgrades*), and three new OPVs (*Gowind OPV Class*) will be delivered over the coming years under a 320 million Euros contract with the French Naval Group shipyard (MercoPress 2020).

However, budget and operative restrictions undermine the effectiveness of such an offshore fisheries monitoring (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2016).

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5

Argentina has adequate manpower for sea-based patrols within the EEZ. However, several gaps are reported with respect to number of inspectors versus operational vessels for surveillance in artisanal fisheries (Kalikoski *et al.*, 2006) coupled with allegations of corruption among inspectors (Saldivia 2014; Santos and Villarino 2015; CeDePesca 2015; Salomon 2019). The Undersecretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture (SSPyA) has 419 trained personnel of which, there were 85 active inspectors (MSC 2011). No information is available on compliance or enforcement competence of authorities in the marine fisheries sector. AGN (2017); Franco (2017); Anon (2017b) reports state that there is shortage of inspectors for unloading controls and inspections at industrial ports.

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

Score: 7.5

Score Range: 7-8

Plans Several management measures are stipulated under the Fisheries Law, and other regulations (“*All owners or tenants of fishing vessels who intend to fish on the high seas must register with the Fisheries Registry in accordance with Resolution CFP No. 8/04 and its regulations by Resolution SAGPYA No. 514/09 and its amendments, using the Remote Procedures (TAD) platform*” (MAGYP 2019)), apply for Argentine flagged fishing vessels operating on the high seas. Moreover, in recent times there are no reported violations from Argentine flagged fishing vessels fishing on the high seas (Corniola 2007). The country is also a party to the FAO Compliance Agreement. In the past, Argentine fishing vessels have been authorized to fish for squid on the high seas during certain months in a year (Anon 2003).

According to MAGYP (2019) fishing vessels flagged to Argentina that intend to fish on the high seas must follow several rules including vessel registration, reporting requirements and flag state obligations to ensure traceability of catches.

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

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7

All Commercial fishing vessels above 21 metres in length are required to be equipped with vessel tracking devices. 554 fishing vessels were equipped with VMS transponders (MSC 2011). SSPyA regulation No. 02/2003 requires all industrial fishing trawlers to be equipped with satellite monitoring equipment and report their position every two hours (MSC 2011).

500 fishing vessels (artisanal, freezers, outriggers, jiggers, long liners, etc.) are equipped with VMS devices in Argentine fisheries (Blanco *et al.*, 2013). VMS coverage is also reported in scallop fisheries (Soria *et al.*, 2016). According to 2017 fleet statistics, Argentina had 1020 licensed fishing vessels (Anon 2018a).

According to Kalikoski *et al.*, (2006) VMS is not very effective in Argentinean fisheries as it is an open system instead of the conventional “black box”. Argentina deserves credit for being one among the few Latin American countries to introduce VMS (Since January 2009) for its artisanal fleet longer

than 10 metres (Anon 2009a). Tampering of VMS signals is reported for the industrial fishing fleet (Marcovecchio *et al.*, 2019). A 2017 audit report of the Undersecretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture agency recommended fisheries agency to “develop and implement a system that automatically collects the position, speed and direction data of the vessels, filters the results according to the fixed criteria (closed area, types of fishing gear, etc.) and generate alarms when conditions that contravene the regulations are met” (AGN 2017; Anon 2017b).

In 2011, Argentina started an integrated control system with introduction of onboard video cameras under regulation DISPOSICION SSPyA1-2011 (<http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/175000-179999/178105/norma.htm>) to watch industrial fishing vessels operating within its EEZ and beyond (Anon 2011; OECD 2012).

However, video cameras to monitor all industrial-fishing vessels are just a matter of fantasy, political speeches, announcements and promises. Up to February 2013, this part of an electronic fishery's monitoring system has not been implemented (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2013).

The camera system is not operating. The aim of the system will observe the use of by-catch and discards. Integrated control system will launch soon (Valdovinos, *pers. comm.*, 2012).

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

Score: 6

Score Range: 4-6

Observer coverage varies in different fisheries. “Observer coverage onboard vessels fishing for Argentine anchovy has ranged from 11 to 13% during the period 2012–2016 in a fleet ranging from 24 to 66 operative vessels. The coverage in vessels targeting Patagonian grenadier has fluctuated between 8 and 36% during the period 2011–2016 in a fleet ranging from 37 to 117 operative vessels” (Pon *et al.*, 2018).

Several commercial fisheries have less than 10% observer coverage. Surimi vessels have 100% OBO coverage, 70% for the Austral Freezer factory trawlers, and 40% for the Hake freezer trawlers (MSC 2012). 100% onboard observer coverage is also reported in the certified hoki trawl fisheries (Morsan *et al.*, 2020). In 2003, a resolution of the Federal Fisheries council has mandated use of observers in 5 ‘poteros’ (CEDEPESCA 2003). According to Blanco *et al.*, (2007) there are 5 Programs of Fishing Observers (POPs) in the Argentine Economic Exclusive Zone: 4 provinces (up to 12 miles) and one national (12 to 200 miles).

In the Rio Negro province 15 observers - 100 sea days/year; Chubut province - 18 observers; Santa Cruz province - 37 observers; Tierra del Fuego Province - 8 observers; INIDEP Observer Program - 45 observers logged more than 6000 sea days/ year. See Q.9 for more information. Observer coverage is still low at 4% of the fishing trips for several commercial fisheries. This should be increased to nearer to 15% if it is to generate representative data (CeDePesca, 2003b; CeDePesca, 2006). 62% of fishing trips in the scallop fishery had observer coverage (Mauna *et al.*, 2012).

## SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

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

Score: 5.5

Score Range: 4-6

Except for squid, hake, scallop and shrimp fisheries, other industrial fisheries receive minimal enforcement at sea. Small-scale coastal fisheries pose more imminent concern than offshore vessels for unregulated catches and under-reporting (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2018). See Anon (2020a); Anon (2019b); Vesco (2019) for more information on illegal discarding and poaching issues in the Argentine EEZ.

Argentina also has an Integrated Fishing Activities Control System (SICAP) using data from all traditional ship tracking systems (AIS, LRIT), from radio to satellite, coastal and long-range radar, integrating them into a common interface to track suspicious fishing vessels fishing/transiting its EEZ (Morales 2019).

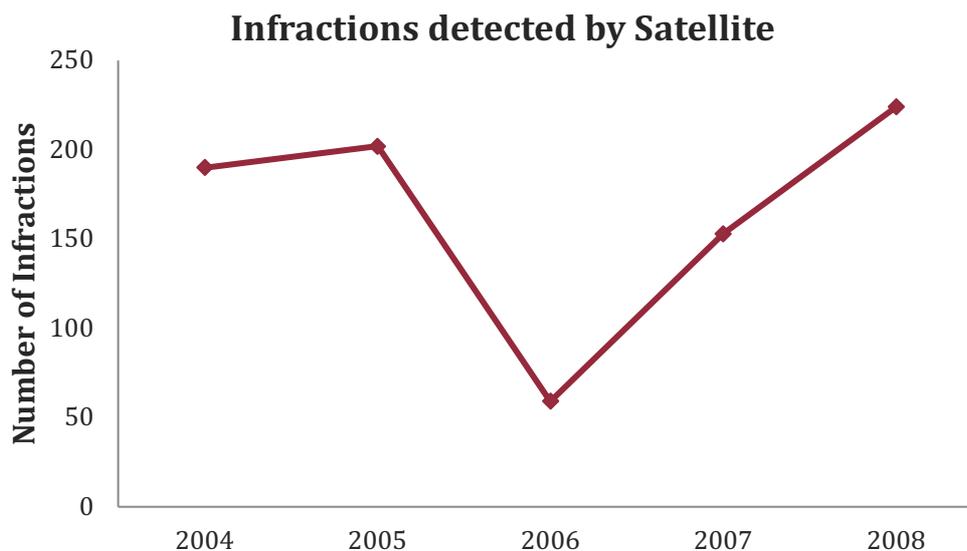
Argentina navy is facing shortage of patrol vessels and most of its vessels had a low operational capability in recent years (Anon 2012; Vedia 2015; USNI 2017; USNI 2020). Offshore squid stocks and straddling stocks along the EEZ boundary are well monitored compared to coastal fish stocks. See Anon (2010); Marcovecchio *et al.*, (2019); AGN (2017) reports for more information.

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

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7

Aerial patrols are carried out using Prefectura Naval Argentina's CASA-212 patrol aircraft within the Argentine EEZ. Argentina navy has four P-3B Orion aircraft for maritime patrol operations (Guevara 2015) but only one is in operation (Anon 2017a) as remaining aircraft are undergoing end-of-service maintenance (*three P-3B Orion aircraft are more than 50 years old*). Argentina navy also has C212 "Aviocar" airplane and three helicopters (PA-44, PA-80 and PA-94) for maritime patrol duties (PFA 2020). Aerial patrols appear to be more frequent in offshore waters during peak fishing seasons targeting squid jiggers transgressing EEZ boundary. See Barroux (2007) for more information. Argentina Coast Guard has one Beech 350ER King-Air aircraft for maritime patrol duties (Military Balance 2020).



Source: Argentina Coast Guard, 2009

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 4-7

**Data poor** (More precise data is needed from Argentine Government agencies for this indicator). Dockside monitoring is compulsory for several commercial fisheries (OECD 2007). However, there appears to be shortage of trained manpower to check artisanal fishing vessels on a regular basis at coastal

landing sites (Elias *et al.*, 2011. ; Salomon 2019; AGN 2017). Current regulations require dockside monitoring for several commercial fishing vessels through daily reporting of catches while at sea, logbooks, observer reports and declaration of catches by captain after each trip to check for compliance with licensing and quota conditions.

The flaws in the current system lead to underreporting and incorrect declaration of catches monitored by land-based inspectors (Valdovinos, *pers.comm.*, 2012).

Landing controls are inadequate according to a 2017 AGN report which stated that “*lack of: i) a data entry procedure that ensures that all landing acts are uploaded, ii) a system design that allows partial loading of the fishing act, and iii) the lack of equipment in some districts, prevents that the system has complete information in a timely manner, which would eventually allow granting fishing permits to vessels without quota, among other control risks. The infrastructure that supports the various operations to control fishing gear and unloading vessels at docks is inadequate to carry out inspection activities and record data in the system, jeopardizing the reliability of the information. From the ocular inspection of the control processes carried out in the ports visited, it has been found that the operations carried out at the docks on the ships arriving at the port are carried out under inadequate infrastructure conditions. The equipment used to control the weight of the merchandise to be unloaded from ships is insufficient or owned by third parties (shipowners, fishing companies, among others), and it could not be verified that they possess a certification on their correct operation. This situation jeopardizes the reliability of the data registered in the system.*” (AGN 2017; Franco 2017; Anon 2017b)

**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

Score Range: 3-5

In 2017, artisanal fleet had nearly 548 vessels (Marcovecchio *et al.*, 2019). See Godelman *et al.*, (1999); Dato *et al.*, (2006); Navarte *et al.* (2007); Elias *et al.*, (2011); Marcovecchio *et al.*, (2019) for information on issues related to monitoring of fish stocks within the EEZ.

In Argentina, coastal fisheries are under the jurisdiction of provincial governments. There are five Maritime Provinces namely Buenos Aires, Rio Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego and monitoring varies significantly among the different provinces. In Chubut Province, there are three

types of artisanal fisheries (excluding algal gathering): [1] commercial diving for mollusks (mostly scallops), [2] beach seining, and [3] coastal gathering (commercial or recreational) of invertebrates (mostly octopus and mussels). The commercial diving fishery operates only in San Jose Gulf and has a limited entry management system (21 teams in recent years). In the rest of the country, safety/navigation issues are in the ambit of the national maritime authority (Prefectura Maritima). The fishery is managed/monitored by the provincial Secretary of Fisheries. A catch quota is determined each year after a survey conducted jointly by the provincial fisheries authority, the artisanal fishers' association and CENPAT (a branch of the national science administration). Quota is split in equal parts among the 21 permit holders. Monitoring of landings by the fisheries authority is far from perfect. Further, also talking about Chubut Province, commercial beach seining and recreational coastal gathering are unregulated, although the first requires a permit. Commercial mussel gathering is regulated (quota, limited entry, exclusive territorial access privileges) only in the case of a small community (El Riacho), located in San Jose Gulf (Orensanz, *pers.comm.*, 2012).

Inspection levels are low and predictable, with 70,000 tonnes of merluza landed illegally and large quantities of unreported discards in the merluza and prawn fisheries. Navy also seizes hundreds of illegal crab traps in the Beagle Channel every year (Anon, *pers.comm.* 2015).

Under the new integrated control system, situation has improved marginally in some commercial fisheries that have requirements like on-board inspectors (*hake, langostino fishery*), observers, vessel tracking system (VMS), electronic landing slips and port inspections. But, these requirements have not been implemented with much rigour leading to under-reporting and misreporting of catches by companies in the domestic fisheries (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2019).

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

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7

All fishing vessels need to seek prior authorization for transshipments (Mangatalle 1996). and transshipments on the high seas is prohibited for Argentine flagged fishing vessels (Anon 2018a). Argentina has introduced electronic fish filing from January 2010 which will require vessels to send information on catches haul by haul through internet, which will aid in faster processing of catch data, certification and in checking legitimacy of catches caught in different jurisdictions (Anon 2009b). Illegal transshipments of catches

taken from the Argentine EEZ are reported for foreign flagged vessels operating near the EEZ maritime boundary (Greenpeace 2019). However, Argentine Government can exercise limited control on illegal catches routed through Montevideo port in Uruguay and other ports of convenience in South Atlantic countries to overseas markets with no trade controls as there is no regional fishery management organisation to oversee unregulated catches and illegal trade of seafood caught in the Argentine EEZ.

The lack of public access to information of fishing parties concerned and operations in this sector remain to be addressed for more transparency in this sector (Valdovinos, *pers.comm.*, 2012).

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

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7

Yes, to a limited extent for several commercial fisheries (OECD 2007). See Q.8; Anon (2010); MSC (2011) documents for more information.

During the year 2016, between Jan-March around 20,000 meters of illegal fishing nets, 11,156 meters of longlines holding 3075 hooks were seized by Prefectura Naval Argentina. In March 2016 alone, PNA conducted 93 operations seizing a total of 7463 meters and 49 espineles reaching 2,725 meters long with 920 hooks. In 2016, Policía Auxiliar Pesquera also conducted 225 operations to prevent and combat illegal fishing along Argentine coast (Anon 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: 7

Score Range: 5-7

The Ley Federal de Pesca N° 24.922 enacted in 1997 (*and regulated by Decree No. 748/1999*) is the main national legislation for fisheries management in Argentine waters. The country adopted NPOA on IUU Fishing in 2007 to fight and end illegal fishing. Argentina is not a party to UN Port State Measures Agreement, and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. However, penalties for illegal fishing have been low (Fernandez 2018; Anon 2019a; Anon 2020b) and smuggling of seafood for export trade is also reported (Anon 2018b; Delgado 2019; Salomon 2019). The country has ratified the FAO Compliance Agreement

on 24 June 1996. See Anon (2012); IADB (2013); WWF (2013); Vedia (2015); AGN (2015); AGN (2017); Santos and Villarino (2015); OECD (2015); OECD (2017); Anon (2018b); Anon (2019b); Fernandez (2019); Marcovecchio *et al.*, (2019) reports for more information on compliance related issues.

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

<b>RFMO</b>	<b>Year of the assessment</b>	<b>Compliant</b>	<b>Partially Compliant</b>	<b>Not Compliant</b>	<b>Source</b>
CCAMLR	2018	Yes			CCAMLR (2019)

*Last Updated: 1 May 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://iuuriskintelligence.com/>). (The author can be contacted at [pramod.raju@gmail.com](mailto:pramod.raju@gmail.com) to provide any feedback).

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