IUU Risk Intelligence

Putting Compliance First

GLOBAL EVALUATION OF FISHERIES MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE – ASSESSING RISK BASED SOLUTIONS

BANGLADESH – COUNTRY REPORT

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IUU RISK INTELLIGENCE

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SUMMARY

This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for ***Bangladesh*** *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.

Suggested citation:

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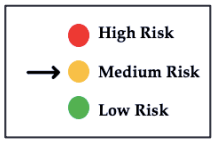
BANGLADESH – COUNTRY REPORT

FAO landings (2013): 588,988 tonnes
Fisheries contribution to GDP (2023): 2.4%
Law of the Sea (Ratification / Accession): 27th July 2001
Coastline: 580 km
RFMO Membership: IOTC
Patrolling Agencies: Bangladesh Coast Guard; Bangladesh Navy; Dept. of Fisheries
Listed as Least Developed Country (LDC) by United Nations (2025): Yes
IUU Fishing Penalties score (2012): Low Penalties (Risk Rating: Red – High Risk)
Corruption Perception Index score (2024): 0.23 (Risk Rating: Red – High Risk)
Flag state compliance score (2023): Excellent (Low Risk)
Fisheries-MCS Index score (2023): Risk Rating – High risk (0.396)
Species targeted by illegal fishing vessels: Hilsha, Sharks, Sardines (small pelagic & benthic finfishes nei)

Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Contraband Trafficking
2.	Piracy
3.	Narcotics Trafficking & 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: 5.5
   Score Range: 5-7

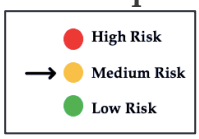


Adequate enforcement capability; but not used effectively for fisheries surveillance in comparison to the number of fishing vessels active in the EEZ (Khan 2010; Khan 2008; Jane 2012; Mazumdar 2015; Nowshin 2015; IISS 2020). The Bangladesh Navy is authorized to verify the licences and fishing gear of trawlers and mechanized vessels mostly in offshore waters. Current surveillance infrastructure imposes monitoring constraints due to the proportion of vast riverine and brackish water areas (*incl. mangrove creeks*), and EEZ area of 164,000 km^2 (ICSF 2006).

Bangladesh Coast Guard has 25 patrol boats, 13 fast patrol boats, 4 offshore patrol vessels and 5 riverine patrol boats (Military Balance 2025). BCG also has 23 Metal Shark Defiant 38 ft. patrol craft for coastal operations (Mazumdar 2015). In 2017, BCG received four offshore patrol vessels (*CGS Syed Nazrul, CGS Tajuddin, CGS Karamuzzaman, CGS Mansoor Ali*) from Italy (Former Minerva-class corvettes converted into offshore patrol vessels by Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri).

Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) is the main fisheries enforcement agency (*since December 1995*) responsible for implementation of territorial waters as per the regulations in the Maritime Zones Act 1974 and Marine Fisheries Ordinance 1983. In addition, BCG is also responsible for monitoring control and surveillance of waterways in the Sundarbans mangrove forest (BCG 2015a). Bangladesh Coast Guard has four 87-meter Offshore Patrol Vessels (*CGS Syed Nazrul; CGS Tajuddin; CGS Mansoor Ali; CGS Kamaruzzaman*); seven Inshore Patrol Vessels (*CGS Sobuj Bangla; CGS Shamol Bangla; CGS Sonar Bangla; CGS Apurbo Bangla; CGS Aparajeyo Bangla; CGS Shadin Bangla; CGS Joy Bangla*); one 38.5-meter length Inshore Patrol Vessel (*CGS R/Bangla*); four 38.7-meter Coastal Patrol Vessels (*CGS Tanveer; CGS Tawfiq; CGS Tawheed; CGS Tamjeed*); two 43.4-meter Fast Patrol Boats (*CGS Sonadia; CGS Kutubdia*); two 31.2-meter Fast Patrol Boats (*CGS P/Grande; CGS Shetgang*); and five 75-feet Riverine Patrol Vessels (*CGS Patuakhali; CGS Noakhali; CGS Pabna; CGS Bogra; CGS Rangamati*) – (BCG 2018a; BCG 2018b).

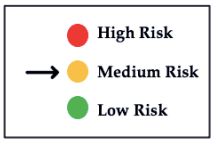
2. **Does the country have adequate trained officers to conduct MCS operations?**
Score: 5
Score Range: 3-5



There are adequate officers for monitoring industrial trawlers at major ports, but a shortage is reported for administrative capacity to monitor small-scale fisheries. Latest data suggests that there are more than 64 District Fisheries Officers (DFO) and 487 Upazila level fisheries officers for enumeration and inspection duties at coastal landing sites (DoF 2019).

DoF (2016); Islam *et al*., (2020); Islam (2020); Al Arif and Karim (2022); DoF (2023a); BOBP (2008); Khan (2008); Mohammad (2012) reports suggest that the Fisheries Department is under-resourced and understaffed esp., for patrolling small-scale landing beaches. There are large numbers of remote and inaccessible landing sites along the coast. This problem is further aggravated due to a lack of adequately trained manpower at both operational and management levels in the MCS division (Chowdhury *et al*. 1998; Mohammad 2011). No information is available on compliance or enforcement competence of these authorities in the marine fisheries sector. Major problems in curtailing piracy due to shortage of manpower and patrol vessels is also reported along the Sundarbans coast (Hussain and Huq 2010).

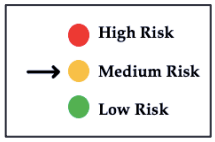
3. **Does the country have adequate management plans to monitor their fishing vessels on the high seas?**
Score: 5
Score Range: 2-5



According to current sources, no Bangladeshi fishing vessels (purse seiners and longliners) are authorised to operate in high seas (IOTC 2021). Tracking is now available for industrial fishing trawlers operating in deeper waters. However, these vessels have not been documented to operate beyond the EEZ limits. Several Bangladeshi fishing vessels have been apprehended for poaching in Myanmar and Indian waters in the previous three decades. However, in comparison to other Asian countries, the number of Bangladeshi fishing vessels that have intruded into neighbouring nations EEZ waters is quite low. See Pramod *et al*., (2008); DoF (2020); Nazrul (2020); IOTC (2021) reports for more information.

4. **What proportion of fishing vessels is equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) to monitor their movements on a continuous basis?**
Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5



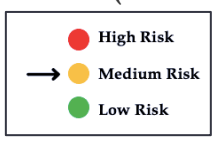
Under a World Bank-funded project the DoF installed tracking devices on fishing vessels. During the first phase, trackers could be installed on 1500 large artisanal vessels (location tracking device called *Global System of Mobile Communications* (GCM) capable of tracking up to 55 km from the coast) and 8500 artisanal boats through the scheme. The GSM trackers are also expected to improve communication and tracking during the storm season (World Bank 2023). Five V-SAT MTUs have been installed on five industrial trawlers that can interact with BS-1 as of June 2024. As of October 2024, the trawler's trajectory can be tracked at any point during the trip using V-SAT MTU and, the VMS can trigger an alert when entering or exiting the MPA and the 40-meter depth contour line. As of October 2024, both the JMC and the vessel can communicate via video and voice at any moment. GSM devices have been installed on 8500 artisanal vessels, representing 28 percent of total registered artisanal vessels (29867) and 33 percent of total approved artisanal vessels (25724) (World Bank 2025). 53 percent of industrial fishing vessels (133 of the 231 trawlers) were equipped with VTMS as of March 2021 and full coverage was expected by the end of 2022 (BMFCBP 2019). However, the VTMS system is not operational yet. Refer to IOTC (2019); BSCMF (2021) reports for relevant information on this aspect.

Data submitted to IOTC suggest that there are no authorized tuna longliners, purse seiners or supply vessels in Bangladesh (IOTC 2021). Under existing regulations, AIS is required for all industrial trawlers for all fishing trips, and they must operate from designated ports (DoF 2021).

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

Score: 4.5

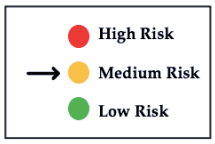
Score Range: 2-5



In FY 2024-2025, 50 on-board observers were deployed, and 185 trips were completed covering 170 trawlers (231 authorised trawlers). On-board observers were responsible for monitoring catches, discarding, transshipment, and other compliance activities (World Bank 2025). Tuna vessels in Bangladesh are not monitored through onboard observers at sea in IOTC waters as no tuna vessels are authorised right now. See BSCMF (2021); IOTC (2021); Pramod and Pitcher (2006) reports for more information on this aspect.

SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

6. **How often fishing vessels are inspected at sea (Identification by sight and boarding for inspections)?**
Score: 4.5
Score Range: 3-5

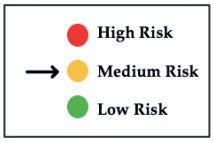


The extent of maritime patrol coverage is not reported (FiTI 2022). Bangladesh lacks effective at-sea boarding facilities and instead relies on coastal landing site inspections to monitor the majority of its domestic fishing boats. The ability of Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Coast Guard to intercept foreign poaching vessels is "*limited due to the lack of sophisticated surveillance and other monitoring systems*" (Nowshin 2015). Further, the areas of policing responsibility differ, with the Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) in-charge of MCS duties up to 40-metre depth line and the Bangladesh Navy responsible for patrolling offshore waters beyond 40-metre depth up to the EEZ boundary (FAO 2019). A Joint Monitoring Centre (JMC) has been established to coordinate MCS operations between the military and civilian institutions.

Absence of a data management system with cross checks of reported catches against vessel logbooks further aggravate shortfalls in the industrial sector (Flewwelling, 2001; Hussain and Huq 2010; Mohammad 2011, 2012). According to BOBP (2008); Nowshin (2015); Cordesman and Taoukan (2014); IHS (2012); IISS (2020); Islam et al., (2020) reports number of inspections are low in proportion to the active fishing fleet. A significant section of the small-scale and semi-industrial fleet is not licensed and unregistered which also imposes disproportionate burden on the MCS infrastructure.

A 22-day ban (October 14 to November 4) on fishing, selling, transporting and storage of hilsha is implemented each year in 36 districts covering 152 Upazilas. Over two months from 1 March to 30 April each year, the capture of hilsa and other fish is also banned in five marine sanctuaries located in six districts. The 65-day fishing ban runs from 20 May to 23 July every year with the Bangladesh navy (up to 16 Bangladesh Navy ships operate from Bhola, Haita, Ramgati, Barisal, Pathaghata and adjacent areas to patrol coastal waters).

7. **How often fishing vessels are scrutinized through aerial patrols?**
Score: 5
Score Range: 2-5

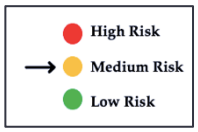


Data deficient (Extent of aerial patrols for fisheries surveillance remain undisclosed in public records). Bangladesh Navy has recently acquired moderate capability for aerial surveillance through procurement of four Dornier Do-228 NG aircraft (Military Balance 2025). In June 2013, Bangladesh navy received delivery of two Dornier 228-NG aircraft from Germany. The aircraft are equipped with "*a 360° surveillance radar, Telephonics RDR-1700B radar and operator console as well as HF, VHF/UHF and VHF FM radios. A search-and-rescue (SAR) direction finder, 6 observer seats and 2 bubble windows – one on either side – further enhance the aircraft's search and patrol capabilities*" (RUAG 2013; Acharjee 2013; IISS 2020). Bangladesh navy placed order for two more Dornier-228 aircraft in 2017 (RUAG Aviation 2017).

A substantial portion of the small-scale & semi-industrial fleet are not licensed and lack visible identification features such as vessel name, flag, and registration number so cross-verification of identified vessels with the vessel registry is often fraught with difficulty during aerial surveillance patrols. Many of the semi-industrial fishing vessels of wooden construction are also engaged in contraband smuggling and piracy so risks are high unless patrol vessels from the Navy and the Coast Guard can intercept them at sea immediately upon detection. The entire fishing fleet must complete the registration exercise before viable assessments can begin, truly speaking (Anon, *pers.comm*., 2023).

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

Score: 4.5
Score Range: 2-5



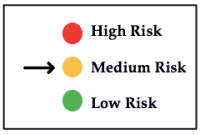
Moderately effective during fishing ban period. Existing information suggests that very small number of artisanal landing beaches and Chittagong port receive enough inspections. See Pramod and Pitcher (2006); Pramod *et al*., (2008); Hussain and Huq (2010); IOTC (2021); Islam *et al*., (2021) reports for more details. According to Anon (2010) report, around 30-40 trawlers were inspected at fishing ports each month (421 mechanized boat inspections were reported in 2010). Bangladesh ratified the UN Port State Measures Agreement on 20 December 2019.

The above data should be treated with caution, as there are no regular harbour inspections of trawlers in Bangladesh. Inspections of small-scale fishing boats that contribute more than 80% of national catches are also very low. Commercial fish are transshipped and sold illegally across land and sea borders of India and Myanmar. Data on seafood trade both within the country and with neighbouring countries is poorly assessed undermining stock

assessments and accurate accounting of catches every year. Catches traded inland after drying are also significantly under-reported in national fisheries statistics. Bartering and trade of seafood also occurs between fishing vessels at sea. More than 60% of the Hilsa caught during spawning season is illegally stored in cold storages and sold in fish markets openly. "*Pohela Boishakh*" is celebrated each year (*coincides with annual Hilsha migration to rivers upstream*) with a Hilsa feast and fish are sold at record prices during this event. The illegal harvest of fish has never received traction as many fish dealers and businessmen provide nets to innocent fishers to catch Hilsha and then illegally trade those fish to get enormous profits. Several hundred tonnes of under-sized hilsha were seized from warehouses where illegal consignments were stacked for the Boishakh festival (Anon, pers.comm., 2017).

Seafood companies have also illegally acquired trawlers from foreign countries without following proper registration requirements (IUU & Flags of Convenience vessels in many instances). Bangladesh Coast Guard is investigating cases of four fishing trawlers (imported without registration) and clearance from Customs. According to Bangladesh Coast Guard, two fishing trawlers "*Shah Amanat MT- 31*" and "*FB Sunera-1*" were imported in 2014 from Thailand without proper authorisations; the two vessels were subsequently detained on Karnaphuli river before handing them over to Customs (BCG 2014). In 2019, two large-industrial trawlers "*Sea View*" and "*Sea Wind*" (of Thai origin) with a history of illegal fishing in Somalia were also detained in Chittagong port after arriving on the pretext of repairs (BBC 2020; Anon 2019).

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



According to a 2018 World Bank report, licensing and monitoring are critically inadequate due to limited institutional capacity, with under three percent of the artisanal fleet holding valid permits (World Bank 2018). 30,000 artisanal vessels are reported; and their operations are restricted to 40 metre depth contour line (DoF 2023). "*According to the frame survey conducted by SCMFP, DoF in 2021-2022, the artisanal fishing fleet consists of over 30 thousand primarily wooden-hulled vessels using passive fishing gears like gillnets, trammel nets, set bag nets, beach seine nets, and longline to catch fish. Among gear groups the most predominant gear is drift gill net or other forms of gill net comprising more than 85% of total gear used followed by the set bag net (12%). Around one-third of the artisanal fishing fleet operates in shallow waters for daily fishing. Rest of the vessels operates mostly within*

40-meter depth zone for multi-days (generally 2 to 13 days) fishing" (DoF 2023a). An organized MCS system does not exist but monitoring of artisanal sector is more rigorous during fishing ban periods (Murshed-e-Jahan *et al*., 2014; Khan 2007; Khan 2008; Hussain and Hoq 2010; BOBP 2010; Kuperan and Jahan 2010; Viswanathan *et al*., 2010). In recent years, Bangladesh Navy has implemented fishery protection campaigns, often to coincide with the Hilsa breeding season. During "*Operation Jhatka*" campaign every year the Coast Guard & Bangladesh Navy seize illegal fishing nets and impound fish fry, even jailing illegal fishers (DoF, 2006; BCG 2006). 3240 Fishers' Groups (FGs) with fisheries co-management committees have been formed in 365 fishing villages to improve fisheries practices and eradicate illegal fishing (BSCMF 2021). Illegal trawling at night within the 40-metre depth contour line is also reported (Mozumder et al., 2023).

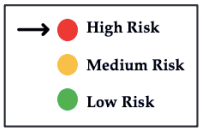
Industrial trawlers and small-scale fishing boats are reported to engage in illegal fishing within marine protected areas and the five marine sanctuaries leading to accidental capture of marine mammals (3 species of turtles and 11 species of sharks) (WCS 2018a). Several species of sharks, rays and marine mammals are protected under the Wildlife Act of 2012 and killing, possession or trade of these species is prohibited. However, implementation of the above act is falling short due to shortage of adequate officers for inspections at markets and landing beaches. Trade of several species of sharks and rays is also banned under CITES regulations. Shark meat is consumed in Bangladesh and shark fins are also exported to China and other overseas markets. It is also difficult to know the extent of landing and illegal trade of shark fins that are protected under Wildlife Act of 2012 as there are few studies to estimate the extent of the catches and exports under this category. WCS (2018b) report states that "*A vigorous trade in shark fins also occurs from Chittagong and Cox's Bazar by boat to the Myanmar border near Teknaf and then transferred to vessels from Myanmar for transport to Yangon and onward to China*." See Rahman (2023); Azad (2022); Haque *et al*., (2019) reports for more details.

Low levels of targeted MCS operations in the small-scale fisheries (except for ban period) and lack of administrative workforce have been acknowledged as a plaguing problem in Bangladesh fisheries (BOBP 2009; EuropeAid 2012; Islam *et al*., 2017; DoF 2020; Miah *et al*., 2021). MCS is inadequate for small-scale fisheries in Bangladesh (Khan 2010; Islam *et al*., 2017; Islam *et al*., (2021); Mohammad 2011; Rahman *et al*., 2020). BCG and Police also seize illegal current nets and jatka fish that is moved through land using trucks during this period each year (Anon 2009). The extent of illegal fishing nets usage might be high, with the Bangladesh Coast Guard Ship 'Shyamal Bagla' seizing 30 million metres of illegal current jal during just one single patrol outing (Anon 2021).

More funding should be allocated for the removal operations and seizure of illegal nets from coastal waters and riverine habitats during the entire year. Aratdars and paikars funding illegal fishing operations should be liable to criminal prosecutions under amended fisheries regulations.

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

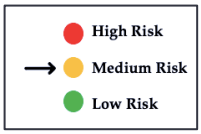
Score: 4
Score Range: 2-5



No, the country does not have adequate infrastructure to check unreported transshipments at sea. Under current fisheries laws transhipments at sea are not allowed. Despite this notification, transhipments of fish cargo are reported between wooden fishing boats (Sampan) in shallow waters. Data submitted to IOTC suggest that there are no authorized tuna longliners, purse seiners or supply vessels in Bangladesh (IOTC 2021). Refer Pramod and Pitcher (2006); Pramod *et al*., (2008); IOTC (2019); IOTC (2021); DoF (2020); FiTI (20222) reports for more information. Bangladesh ratified the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (Ratified on 5 November 2012). 232 registered trawlers (*wooden and steel construction*) are reported (restricted to operate in more than 40 metres depth); and 67,669 artisanal vessels are reported of which nearly half are mechanised (DoF 2021; DoF 2023b). See Q.8 & Q.9 for more information.

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

Score: 4.5
Score Range: 2-5



No, but routine gear inspections are conducted at landing centers during the Hilsa fishing ban period than the remainder of the year. Undersized gillnets and set bag-nets are banned and subjected to confiscation during inspections (DoF 2023a). Country is ranked as one the top five nations in Southeast Asia for confiscating illegal fishing nets in small-scale fisheries, with regular seizure and burning of millions of meters of banned fishing nets each year. However, several artisanal fishing gears might fall under the unregulated category as subsistence fishers operate these gears outside the boundaries of national laws and regulations. A significant number of artisanal fishing vessels are yet to be registered; with some studies suggesting that less than 18% of the total artisanal fleet was licensed (BSCMF 2021). Currently, due to the absence of a national database on fishing gears by each Upazila, under-reporting is prevailing in this sector. Small-scale fishers are also vulnerable to debt-trap, so the cycle of illegal net use can increase and continue in future. It is recommended that illegal gear

should be confiscated from net making factories and other suppliers to protect fishers from debt-trap liability to boat owners and financiers. Marine Fisheries Ordinance (1983) and the Marine Fisheries Rules, (1983) provide detailed information on mesh size requirements for various fishing gear deployed along the Bangladesh coast (*Shrimp trawl net – minimum cod end mesh size – 45 mm; Fish trawl net minimum cod end mesh size – 60 mm; Large mesh drift net – minimum mesh size 200 mm; Small mesh drift net – minimum mesh size – 100 mm; Set bag net – minimum mesh size of cod end – 30 mm*). Push net and dragnet fishers illegally catch shrimp post larvae for the aquaculture sector and engage 150,000 to 400,000 women and children in illegal collection operations (FAO 2014).

Anon (2010) report suggests that a certain number of trawlers are inspected for gear and equipment compliance each year. Mobile squads often seize and burn illegal artisanal fishing nets to discourage poachers (Anon 2015). Refer Pramod *et al*., (2008); Pramod and Pitcher (2006); Hussain and Hoq (2010); BOBP (2010); Roy and Eagle (2017); Islam *et al*., (2016); Islam *et al*., (2020); Islam *et al*., (2021); Mozumder *et al*., (2023) documents for more information. According to BOBP (2008) there were 185,000 illegal shrimp fry collectors directly involved in marine fisheries sector in Bangladesh. Since 2001, Bangladesh Navy has conducted two operations "*Operation Jatka*" and "*Operation Maa Elish Rokksha*", to aid civilian institutions in Hilsa conservation efforts in Bhola, Hatia, Ramgati, Barishal, Chandpur, Patharghata regions. From 2001 to 2019, Bangladesh Navy seized 84.08 crore meters of illegal fishing nets worth 260.5 crore Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) through these operations (Bangladesh Navy 2019). Illegal current nets are also seized from shops and godowns by Bangladesh Costa Guard and burned in the presence of judiciary (UNB 2022). Debt trap also pushes artisanal fishers to engage in illegal fishing practices (The Guardian 2020). Control and ownership of fishing operations might influence the dynamics of illegal fishing operations during the ban period and the remainder of the year. As Mozumder *et al*., (2020) state "*…local people with a connection to power usually own all the big, motorized boats. They usually give bribes to the Police and can continue fishing during the ban period, especially at night. If there is any raid, they usually get information from their sources in a police station. We go for illegal fishing during the ban period to survive, but they (motorized boat owners) catch fish out of greed, as they have monetary and political power*."

Small-scale fisheries in brackish waters are far better patrolled than industrial fisheries during closed seasons. Illegal fishing gear are regularly seized and confiscated during the hilsha breeding period in brackish waters, but inspections are rare during the remainder of the year. Poverty, debt bondage and easy access to illegal fishing nets have allowed the destructive practice of catching juvenile shrimps, hilsa and fish fry to continue in mangrove forests,

rivers, brackish water creeks and estuarine waters. Use of illegal current nets, set nets, and drift nets (monofilaments nets) with small-mesh size is rampant in mangroves, estuaries and coastal deltaic regions, leading to serial depletion of juvenile fish stocks (Anon, *pers.comm*., 2022).

Type of fishing net	**Bangla name**	**Mesh size** (inches (″) or cm)	**Regulatory status of the fishing net** (legal/illegal)
Gillnet	Chapila jal		legal
Gillnet	Sutar Jal	6 cm	legal
Seine net	Ber Jal (other names: Git jal; Pittaina jal)	0.25-1.0	Unknown
Seine net	Tiger jal		legal
Gillnet	Chandi jal	4-5.0″	legal
Gillnet	Poa Jal	3.5-4.0″	legal
Gillnet	Ilsih jal	1.0-3.0″	legal
Gillnet	Poa jal (other names: Sada jal; Duba jal)	0.75-3″	Unknown
Gillnet	Kona jal	2-2.5″	Unknown
Gillnet	Poma jal	2.5-4 cm	Unknown
Gillnet	Dandi jal	1.2-3.2 cm	Unknown
Gillnet	Kajoli jal	2 cm	Unknown
Gillnet	Pocket jal (other names: Zero Sutar jal	3-3.5″	legal
Gillnet	Chap jal (other names: Jata jal; Chhoi Sutar jal)	3-6″	Unknown
Gillnet	Chingri jal (other names: Nakura jal)	1-1.5″	Unknown
Trammel Gillnet	Pondora jal; Tong jal		Unknown
Other gillnets	Network jal; Badha jal; Komal jal; Sani jal; Sappa jal; Duba jal; Sutar jal; Chandi jal		Unknown
Gillnet	Foilla jal		legal
Gillnet / Beach Seine	Chor ghera jal		illegal
Mosquito net	Moshari jal	0.1-0.4	illegal
Monofilament gillnet	Current jal (other names: Vasha jal; Rog jal; Losa jal; Moka jal; Fash jal)	0-5-2.0	illegal
Drift gillnet	Maitta jal or Maitya jal or Pocker jal	4-4.15″	Unknown
Liftnet	Dharma jal (other names: Khora jal; Veshal jal)	0.5-1.0 cm	illegal

Push net	Moiya jal (other names: Thela jal)	0.25-0.75	illegal
Dragnet	Thela jal (Other names: Pona jal; Moi jal)	0.1-0.2″	illegal
Dipnet	Khara jal	0.1-0.2″	illegal
Cast net	Jhaki jal (Other names: Satki jal; Khepla jal; Bachari jal)	1.0-2.5 cm	legal
Fish trap	Bair jal	-	Unknown
Fish trap	Boro chai, Dar chai, Gura chai		illegal
Stake Net	Khalpata jal		illegal
Trawl net	Goria jal		Unknown
Beach Seine	Tana jal		Unknown
Fixed purse net or Estuarine Set Bag Net (ESBN)	Behundi jal (Other names: Banda jal; Bindi jal)	0.1-1.0 cm	illegal
Fixed purse net	Badha jal	0.5-1 cm	Unknown
Fixed purse net	Jhaki jal	0.5-1 cm	Unknown
Fixed Purse net	Bata Jal	1.5-2.0″	Unknown
Purse seine net	Jagatber jal	0.5-1 cm	illegal
Seine net	Gara jal (small meshed large seine net with fixed bamboo poles that extend across the river)		illegal
Seine net	Katha Ber jal	0.1 cm	illegal
Seine net	Moia jal	0.5 cm	illegal
Seine net	Gachijal	0.4 cm	illegal
Seine net	Mushuri jal	0.4 cm	illegal
Seine net	Kechki jal		Unknown
Seine net	Angta jal	0.1-1 cm	Unknown
Fixed net	Charber jal		illegal
Hook and line	Chhara Barshi, Chingri Barshi, Cast Barshi	-	legal
	China duari net		illegal
	M – mesh size (inches or cm)		

Table 1. Legal and illegal fishing gears used in Bangladesh small-scale fisheries. *Although the Marine Fisheries Ordinance and its associated fisheries rules stipulate mesh size requirements for gillnets, seine nets and trawl gear, they are not implemented in small-scale fisheries.* In addition, several million metres of illegal fishing nets like Current jal (Monofilament gillnet), Behundi jal (Estuarine Set Bag net), Char gera jal (Multi-layered drift gillnet) and other unregulated fishing

nets are used by artisanal fishers in coastal, estuarine and riverine waters. Further published studies reveal that mesh size (in inches, mm or cm) for even similar type gillnets or seine nets vary within each coastal district and upazilas. Table 1. has been drafted using information from fisheries laws, and data on fishing gears (incl. mesh sizes) taken from various published research articles (Ahmed *et al.*, 2021; Sunny *et al.*, 2020; Sultana *et al.*, 2018; Sultana *et al.*, 2016; Hossain *et al.*, 2019; Jaman *et al.*, 2019; Mia *et al.*, 2018; Rahman *et al.*, 2017; Rahman *et al.*, 2016; Hasan *et al.*, 2016; Rashed *et al.*, 2016; Rahman *et al.*, 2007).

YEAR	NATURE OF ILLEGAL FISHING NET SEIZURES (Hilsha fisheries)	SOURCE
2006	3,445,490 metres of illegal fishing gear worth 57,178,750/00 Taka seized	BCG (2006)
2013	Fishers ignoring the hilsa ban; Crackdown by BCG and other institutions led to seizure of 7 tonnes of illegally caught hilsa and detention of 26 fishing boats; and 280 court cases were filed.	Anon (2013)
2011-2016	"*A total of 7540 mobile court and 33,635 drives had taken place from 2011 to 2016 to prevent the illegal fishing of Ilish. The courts fined unscrupulous fishermen a total of Tk 18.22 crore for catching mother Ilish and jatka (Ilish fry less than 23 cm in length). They also filed 6650 cases, arrested 5095 fishermen, and confiscated a total of 887.8 million metres of fin fishing net*".	Kalloi (2017); Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
2018	"*A total of 54 mobile courts sentenced some 124 fishermen to different terms of imprisonment, from a minimum of 10 days to a maximum of two months, and led 190 cases against them. The fishermen were also fined around Tk4.71 lakh in the drives. Members of law enforcement agencies also seized 6,128kg of ilish, worth Tk1.83 crore, and 4,007,200 metres of fishing net*"	Anon (2018)
2020	2740 mobile courts in eight divisions of the country ran from October 14 to November 4.	Anon (2020b)
2020	"*Bangladesh Coast Guard seized 22,00,000 metres of illegal 'current' net and 7,000 metres of 'sandbar-surrounding' nets from the East Bay*"	Anon (2020c)
2020	"*442 mobile courts and 3,059 inspections were conducted in the eight divisions and 6.6 million metres of current nets worth Tk 91.3 million were seized in the first three days. The courts sent 178 fishers to jail for different terms while a total of 273 cases were filed under the Fisheries Act, said a press release. Catching, marketing, transporting, selling, bartering, and stocking hilsa are prohibited during the fishing ban period*"	Anon (2020d)
2020	"*326 fishermen jailed for defying Hilsa ban in Manikganj The mobile courts seized and burnt 56 lakh metres of illegal fishing nets worth Tk14 crore*"	Anon (2020e)
2020	"*River police seized 97 trawlers, 67 lakh metres of current nets, and detained six fishermen while preparing for illegally catching hilsa in the River Padma in Munshiganj.*"	Anon (2020f)
2021	"*1.8 lakh metres of current nets were recovered from different rivers of Barishal*"	Anon (2021b)
2021	"*River police of Chattogram seized 40,000 meters of illegal fishing net from the estuary of Halda and Karnaphuli rivers*"	Anon (2021c)

Table 2. BCG and DoF Seizures of illegal fishing nets (2006-2022)

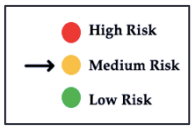
Year	Number of ships Involved	Apprehended Boats	Nets seized (meter)	Apprehended Crew	Seized Jatka (kg)	Value(Taka)
2001	12	42	203,680	25	8960	11,659,650.00
2002	16	86	461,265	37	2160	29,542,901.00
2003	7	41	4,065,859	2	145	390,026,750.00
2004	11	8	34,015,057	0	8423	642,663,400.00
2005	15	5	32,848,530	4	15,980	1,319,256,517.00
2006	16	2	95,736,491	0	58,620	2,487,567,090.00
2007	15	10	61,009,465	13	21,582	3,142,536,300.00
2008	15	0	37,268,154	0	1923	1,495,895,300.00
2009	14	2	63,472,200	0	1661	1,911,300,320.00
2010	15	0	63,867,404	0	922	2,387,907,805.00
2011	13	21	75,615,370	7	15,043	3,179,773,570.00
2012	14	1	32,440,592	0	13,900	2,258,240,090.00
2013	18	3	60,989,750	13	3515	1,266,540,500.00
2014	20	13	2,31,25,271	3	7452	64,15,10,500.00
2015	13	0	1,64,21,962	8	518	47,03,64,140.00
2016	25	01	1,30,36,550	00	1280	47,21,23,000.00
2017	25	02	2,14,27,370	00	2774	59,60,59,400.00
2018	16	1	7,34,59,480	0	6	1597931500
2019	16	1	11,04,35,350	0	3829	2985647800
2020	34	0	8,76,60,250	02	1692	2543396550

Table 3. Bangladesh Navy - seizure of illegal fishing nets (2006-2020 years) annual Jhatka Fishing Campaign (Source: Bangladesh Navy)

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: 4-6



Moderate progress (Mozumder *et al.*, 2023; Nakmaura *et al.*, 2022; World Bank 2025). On 26 November 2020 the new Marine Fisheries Act 2020 received approval of the president (Anon 2020) which replaced the Marine Fisheries

Ordinance of 1983. The country has drafted a NPOA on IUU Fishing in 2019 to fight and eliminate illegal fishing. Bangladesh has ratified the UN Fish Stocks Agreement on 5 November 2012 and the UN Port State Measures Agreement on 20 December 2019. The country is not a party to the FAO Compliance Agreement. The number of illegal foreign trawlers detained for illegal fishing has been decreasing in recent decades with 50 trawlers apprehended by Bangladesh Navy between 1985 to 1997 (USNI 2001) and 86 foreign trawlers and mechanised fishing boats were seized by Bangladesh Navy between 1990 to 1997 (Deb 2000). Other fisheries laws also apply "1950 Protection and Conservation of Fish Act.", and the Mobile Court Ordinance of 2007. Mobile courts are mostly active during the fishing ban period and there is often a reported shortage of magistrate and other administrative resources (Police and DoF officers) to conduct raids and prosecute offenders through courts (Keya *et al.*, 2020; Miah *et al.*, 2021).

Unregistered vessels contribute to loss of taxation and licensing revenue to the state. Vessel registration exercise for unregistered fishing boats and wooden trawlers needs to be completed to evaluate the extent of unreported and unregulated catches in small-scale fisheries. Revoking of licences is also needed for illegal net manufacturers. See ANU (2024); Al Arif and Karim (2022); Nakamura *et al.*, (2022); DoF (2021); DoF (2023a,b); Ahmed *et al.*, (2021); Islam *et al.*, (2021); Islam *et al.*, (2017); Pramod and Pitcher (2006); Mohammad (2011); Mohammed and Wahab (2013); Cordesman and Toukan (2014); Hoq (2014); Viswanathan *et al.*, (2010); Shamsuzzaman and Islam (2018); Uddin (2019); Nazrul (2020); BBC (2020); Islam (2020) documents for more information.

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

RFMO	Year of assessment	Compliant	Partially Compliant	Not Compliant	Source
IOTC	2020		Yes		IOTC (2021a.b)

Last Updated: 29 June 2025

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 prammod.raju@gmail.com to provide any feedback).

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