



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

NAMIBIA – COUNTRY REPORT

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SUMMARY

This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for Namibia 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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NAMIBIA – COUNTRY REPORT



FAO landings (2023): 373,000 tonnes

Fisheries contribution to GDP (2020): 3.89%

Law of the Sea (Ratification /accession): 18th April 1983

Coastline: 1572 km

RFMO Membership: CCAMLR, SEAFO, ICCAT

Patrolling agencies: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform;
Namibian Navy



IUU Fishing Penalties score (2012): Low Penalties (Risk Rating: **Red - High Risk**)

Corruption Perception Index score (2025): 46 (Risk Rating: **Orange - Moderate Risk**)

Flag state compliance score (2025): Excellent (Risk Rating: **Green - Low Risk**)

Fisheries-MCS Index score (2023): Risk Rating: (0.570)– **Orange - Moderate Risk**

Species targeted by illegal fishing vessels: Hake, horse mackerel, sardines, sharks

Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Organised crime
2.	Illegal fishing
3.	Human trafficking

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: 4-7



Namibia has adequate surveillance infrastructure to monitor fishing fleets operating within its EEZ (Military Balance 2025; Namibian Govt., 2023). However, a recent OAG (2025) report has raised concerns about the shortage of patrol vessels due to unplanned maintenance and vessel repairs. Aerial patrols have also declined over the years due to reliance on just one fixed-wing aircraft. Fisheries surveillance is undertaken by deploying 2 coastal patrol vessels “*Nataniel Maxuilili*” and “*Anna Kakurukaze Mungunda*”; 1 offshore patrol vessel “*Elephant*”; 1 coastal patrol craft “*Oryx*”; and 3 patrol boats (1 *Brendan Simbwaye*; 2 *Marlim*) (Military Balance 2025). See Simataa *et al.*, (2025a,b) for more information.

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 5-7

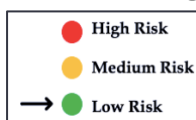


Yes, to a moderate extent. Existing manpower can be considered adequate as there is a very nominal artisanal fishery and industrial catches are landed in two designated ports, which are well manned with dockside inspectors. Latest data - 174 fisheries inspectors are reported, of which 123 are sea-going staff (Shikololo 2024; Namibian Govt., 2025). See Angula (2025) report for more information.

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

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7



Namibia is a signatory to the FAO Compliance Agreement, which necessitates responsibility for vessels flying its flag on the high seas. Namibian Government action against “*Antillas Reefer*” and “*Paloma V*” are examples of its ability to prosecute Namibian flagged vessels engaged in IUU activities beyond its EEZ (fishing licenses of “*Paloma V*” and the “*Antillas Reefer*” were revoked, and “*Paloma V*” has been deregistered from the Namibia fishing fleet register)

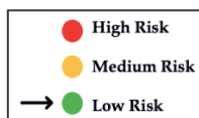
(Bergh 2008). Overall score range reduced due to two cases (Shang Fu and Nata 2) of hidden ownership uncovered in 2022 (SIF 2025).

During the 2020/2021 reporting period, 48 vessels operated outside the EEZ limits (MFMR 2021).

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

Score: 7.5

Score Range: 7-9



Target coverage met (Namibian Government, 2025). During the 2022/2023 time period, 170 vessels were tracked using VMS devices (OAG 2025). Industrial fishing vessels (>24 m in length) are required to report their position details every 1 hour (Namibian Govt., 2025). See MFMR (2021) report for more list of vessels with VMS coverage.

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 4-5



Data deficient (2024-2026). The Fisheries Observer Agency (FOA) is the lead agency for this role. 140 fisheries observers were reported; but coverage has not met regulatory requirements in recent years – 53% coverage was reported in 2023 (OAG 2025; Namibian Govt., 2025). Obstruction of observers is also reported (Itembu *et al.*, (2023). In the past, observer coverage for industrial fishing vessels operating in the Namibian EEZ was close to 80%. 230 fisheries observers are required to meet the benchmark inspection targets in the Namibian fisheries sector (Ndara 2015). See AU (2016); Adetona (2011) for more information.

SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

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

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5



Data deficient (2023-2026 time period). Some improvement in the number of patrols over the past few years, but underlying challenges remain – old vessels and outdated surveillance infrastructure (Simataa *et al.*, 2025a,b; Bruwer 2025). For the 2021-2022 time period, only 64% of the planned at-sea patrol targets were achieved. However, during the 2022-23 assessment period, planned patrol targets were reportedly achieved (OAG 2025). According to Shikololo (2024); Namibian Govt (2025) reports patrol vessels have only achieved 88 sea days, which is below the optimal monitoring target of 144 days. Allocated national budgets have not been able to match increasing operational costs (patrol boat repairs, fuel costs) and MCS expenditure in recent years (The Namibian 2022).

In the 2020-21 period, 10 sea patrol missions were reported (MFMR 2021). In 2017, patrols were reduced by 65% in comparison to 2016 due to budget cuts by the Government (MFMR 2018).

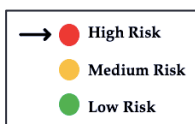
The number of at-sea patrols is likely down due to budget cuts and unplanned vessel repairs for prolonged time periods. Normally, each patrol lasts 12-20 days, and one or two fisheries inspectors are deployed for each at-sea mission. Government agencies receive regular reports of illegal foreign trawlers that are active in northern Namibian waters, but have limited means of apprehending them through conventional VMS tracker assets, as foreign vessels often switch off their AIS transponders or engage in border hopping at night. Offshore surveillance also needs improvement, and regional co-operation with SADC must be improved to apprehend illegal border hoppers. Up to 10% of the total catch is not reported accurately, as far as illegal catches (quota monitoring) from domestic industrial fleets is concerned. Under-reporting of frozen fish, fleets exceeding quota limits, higher by-catch retention, and discards are other areas of concern (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2022).

In the 2010-11 period, patrol vessels “*Nathaniel Maxuilili*” and “*Anna Kakurukaz Mungunda*” conducted 27 sea patrols (sailing for 321 days), inspecting 109 Namibian fishing vessels and observing activities of 221 other fishing vessels (incl. cargo reefers, tankers etc.) and recording a total of 19 violations (MFMR 2011). In 2009, the two patrol vessels undertook a total of 23 surveillance trips in Namibian EEZ, sighting 560 and inspecting 227 fishing vessels (“*Nathaniel Maxuilili*” – 12 trips covering 145 days inspected 344 fishing vessels through 104 inspections, and “*Anna Kakurukaze Mungunda*” – 11 surveillance trips covering 138 days inspected 216 fishing vessels through 123 inspections (MFMR 2009). See Kahiurika (2017) for more information.

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

Score: 3.5

Score Range: 2-4



Data deficient (2022-2026 time period). Aerial patrol hours have fluctuated over the years. Two fixed-wing patrol aircraft *Sea Eagle 1* and *Sea Eagle 2* are available for fisheries patrols, but often only one aircraft is operational (Shikololo 2024; Namibian Govt., 2025).

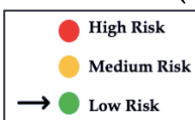
Coverage has been deficient since 2020 (OAG 2025). Only one patrol mission was reported for the 2020-2021 time period (MFMR 2021). In 2022, aerial surveillance led to the sighting and detention of 33 illegal fishing vessels (Iroanya and Simataa 2024; Justinu 2022).

In the past, aerial patrols were reported at least four times each week covering the whole EEZ, and one fisheries inspector accompanied air force personnel during such missions (Ndara 2015). During the 2010-11 period, fisheries patrol aircraft ("*Sea Eagle I*" and "*Sea Eagle II*") conducted 82 aerial patrols, logging 187.8 hours (MFMR 2011). In 2009, the lone fixed-wing patrol aircraft conducted 26 surveillance flights, logging 86 flying hours, sighting 247 fishing vessels (MFMR 2009). In 2005, a total of 151 aerial patrols were reported, amounting to 878 hours of flying for fisheries surveillance purposes (Anon 2005).

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

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7



Data deficient (2020-2025 time period). Reportedly adequate according to Government reports (Namibian Govt, 2025) and SADC (2026) reports.

Up to 200 port visits were recorded for foreign fishing vessels each year. Fishing vessels are required to provide daily catch and effort reports via radio and notify entry and exit reports 48 hours in advance. Logbooks are also used by port inspectors to cross-verify landed catches. The Ministry of Fisheries has 80 onshore inspectors to ensure quota compliance at Walvis Bay and Lüderitz fishing ports (Ndara 2015).

Not all vessels are inspected; priority is given for vessels flagged on RFMO blacklists and vessels identified for regional high seas violations (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2022).

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: 4-5



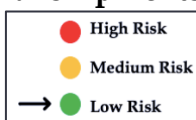
There is a partially effective coastal patrol scheme in Namibian fisheries due to the absence of small-scale fisheries, and a relatively small recreational fishery that is well monitored through shore and sea-based patrols. “1436 daily coastal patrols resulted in 644 fines valued at N\$341,600” (SADC 2026). 1256 daily coastal MCS patrols were reported for the 2020/2021 time period (MFMR 2021).

However, gaps are reported in recent years (Namibian Govt., 2025). See Angola (2025); OAG (2025); Iitembu *et al.*, (2023); Pramod *et al.*, (2008) documents for more information.

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

Score: 7

Score Range: 5-7



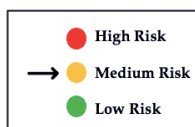
Data deficient (The total number of transhipments monitored at ports is not reported in MFMR reports – hence, this indicator cannot be assessed with certainty). Transhipments at sea are prohibited and only allowed at designated ports (Ndara 2015). Namibia is a signatory to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, ICCAT, and SEAFO, and abides by all the regulations of these regional fishery management organizations.

Under the “Regulations relating to the exploitation of marine resources” (No. 241 of 2001) section 36(2) “*Except in accordance with conditions attached to a licence or with a written authorisation by the Permanent Secretary, no transhipment of any marine resources from or to any fishing vessel or any other vessel may be carried out at any place other than inside a port in Namibia and under the supervision of a fisheries inspector or any other person designated by the Permanent Secretary for that purpose.*”

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

Score: 4.5

Score Range: 4-7



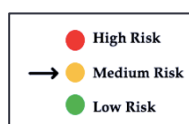
Data deficient (2020-2026). Achieved moderate progress to a limited extent, through coastal patrols and fish landing beach inspections. Monofilament nets

were banned in 2016, but illegal use of such nets is still reported. See OAG (2025); Simataa *et al.*, (2025a,b); Iitembu *et al.*, (2023); MFMR (2021); OECD (2012); MFMR (2009) documents for more details.

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



The Marine Resources Act of 2000 is the main national legislation for fisheries management in Namibian waters. The country adopted an NPOA on IUU Fishing in 2007. Namibia ratified the FAO Compliance Agreement on 7 August 1998, the UN Fish Stocks Agreement on 8 April 1998, and the UN Port State Measures Agreement on 18 July 2017. Budget cuts for illegal fishing patrols in onshore and offshore waters could lead to low deterrence in the future (Kahiurika 2017; Anon 2017; MFMR 2018). Hidden ownership has also been uncovered (SIF 2025). Illegal fishing in Namibian waters is estimated to contribute to revenue loss of around N\$1.5 billion (Namibian Govt, 2025).

Use of patrolling assets is optimized due to the absence of small-scale fisheries, and all industrial landings are monitored from two ports. Removal of by-catch limits has led to the unsustainable decline of several commercial fish species. Although high grading, misreporting, and non-compliance with quota (TAC) limits were reported in industrial fisheries, and illegal fishing is on the rise in small-scale/recreational fisheries, overall compliance is still quite good compared to its African neighbours. Penalties for illegal fishing have not been raised despite persistent concerns over lower fines acting as a low deterrent to offenders. Corruption has also been brought to light through the fishrot scandal investigation (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2022).

Concerns regarding the alarming increase in reported by-catch volumes by industrial trawlers have been addressed by the Fisheries Minister recently (Bycatch levy raised from 15 to 50%) (Windhoek Observer, 2026).

See Pramod and Pitcher (2006); Grobler (2008); Sherbourne (2010); Huggin (2011); Esau (2013); Patterson *et al.*, (2013); Ndara (2015); Coetzee (2021); MFMR (2021); Iitembu *et al.*, (2023); Grynberg *et al.*, (2023); Warikandwa (2023); Angula (2025); Simataa *et al.*, (2025a,b); SIF (2025) reports 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
CCAMLR	2024	Yes			CCAMLR (2025)
SEAFO	2025	Yes			SEAFO (2025)
ICCAT	2024	Yes			ICCAT (2025)

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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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