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REPORT OF JAPAN'S SCIENTIFIC OBSERVER PROGRAM FOR
TUNA LONGLINE FISHERY IN THE CONVENTION AREA OF
INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION IN 2013
CALENDAR YEAR

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Summary

In accordance with Resolution C-11-08, Japan commenced its scientific observer program for longline fishery in the Convention area of Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) from 1 January 2013. This document provides the scientific observers' information in 2013 calendar year. In 2013 calendar year, six (6) observer trips were conducted on Japanese tuna longline vessels in the Convention Area. Total number of fishing operation with observers was 560 days. Details of observer trip and tentative catch records in this year were also shown in this report.

Keywords

Longline, Japan, Scientific observer, Tuna fisheries

Introduction

Before adoption of Resolution C-11-08, Japan has continuously been conducting its scientific observer program for longline fishery in the Convention Area since 2007. One to four observers were dispatched every year. The main task of the scientific observers was to record the catches of targeted fish species, its species composition and other biological information as well as interactions with non-target species such as sea turtles, sea birds and sharks. Also, various data on fishing operations, including vessel attributes, gear configuration, and bycatch mitigation measures as well as date/time, duration and location of operation, have been collected by the scientific observers. This document overviews Japan's scientific observer programs and provides the summary of collected data in 2013 calendar year.

Training of the scientific observer

In principal, all scientific observers attend a training class held by Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation of Japan and Japan NUS under Japan's observer program before their departure for the cruise. The National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries (NRIFSF) of the Fisheries Research Agency provides an observer manual and supervises the training course. Under the course scientific observers are trained in skills necessary for conduct its part, including species identification, data recording protocols etc.

Results

i) Details of Observer Trip and observer coverage

Details of observer trips in 2013 calendar year in the Convention Area were shown in Table 1. In 2013 calendar year, six (6) observer trips were conducted on Japanese tuna longline vessels. Total number of fishing operation with observers was 560 days. The area in which the vessel operated with the observer on board was ranged in 6.0N~17.7S, 86.2~144.4W. The observer coverage in this year is in the process of calculating and will be submitted soon.

Table 1. Information on the trip of the scientific observer for Japanese tuna longline in the convention areas of

Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission during 2013.

Trip ID	Range of latitude	Range of longitude	Start date of operation	End date of operation	Number of operation
IA201301	5.7-13.2S	114.5-132.8W	2013/2/6	2013/6/10	119
IA201302	5.8-16.1S	105.0-132.0W	2013/8/11	2013/10/24	68
IA201303	4.9N-11.6S	114.7-140.1W	2013/11/20	2014/1/9	43
IA201304	13.3-16.2S	86.2-91.4W	2013/6/8	2013/8/27	79
IA201305	6.0N-7.5S	127.2-144.4W	2013/7/10	2013/10/5	82
IA201306	5.1-17.6S	120.3-133.3W	2013/6/2	2013/12/5	169
Total					560

ii) Catch records, including bycatch data

Observers record every items taken on deck and identified the species by themselves. By 31 March 2014, only one (1) observer trip was compiled for analyze catch record. The tentative list of species recorded by scientific observer on longline fishery in 2013 was shown in Table 2. As you know, observers also collected bycatch data. They take photos of bycatch species according to the procedures given in the observer manual made by NRIFSF scientists. Bycatch experts in NRIFSF identify species using these photos. The catch records from the remaining five (5) observer trips have been already submitted and are in the process of analysis. The updated list will be submitted soon.

Table 2. Tentative list of species recorded by scientific observer on longline fishery in the Convention Area in

2013 calendar year

Cruises	1
Species	Inds.
Albacore	235
Yellowfin tuna	357
Bigeye tuna	832
Sword fish	500
Other marlins	373
Other teleosts	761
Blue shark	178
Other sharks	625
Rays	1,001
Sea birds	0
Sea turtles	13
Mammals	1
Total	4,876

Acknowledgement

We greatly appreciate all scientific observers for their efforts in order to collect valuable data and samples on the Japanese longline vessels. We would also like to express special thanks to all crews of the longline vessels for their understanding and cooperation to the observer program.